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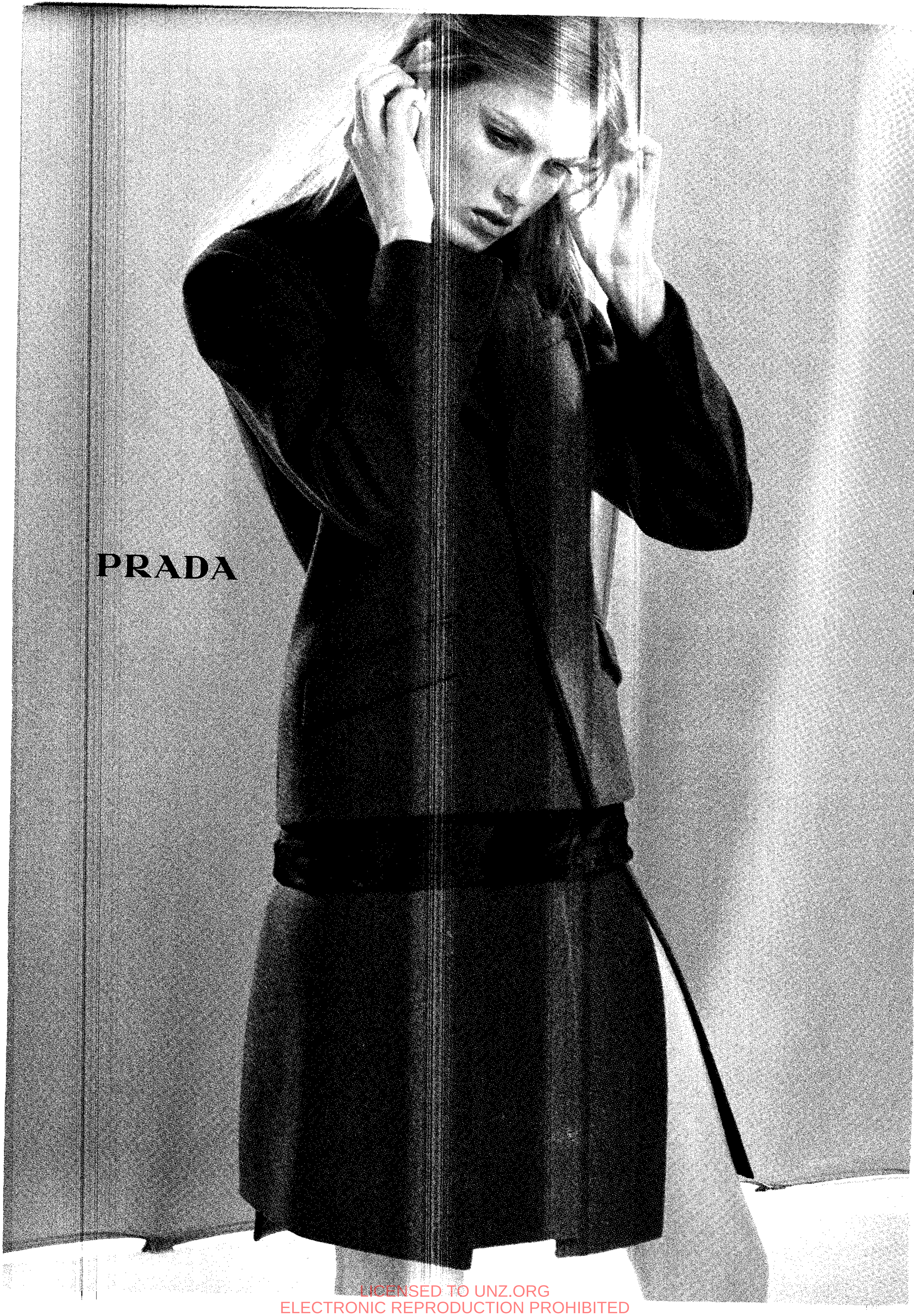
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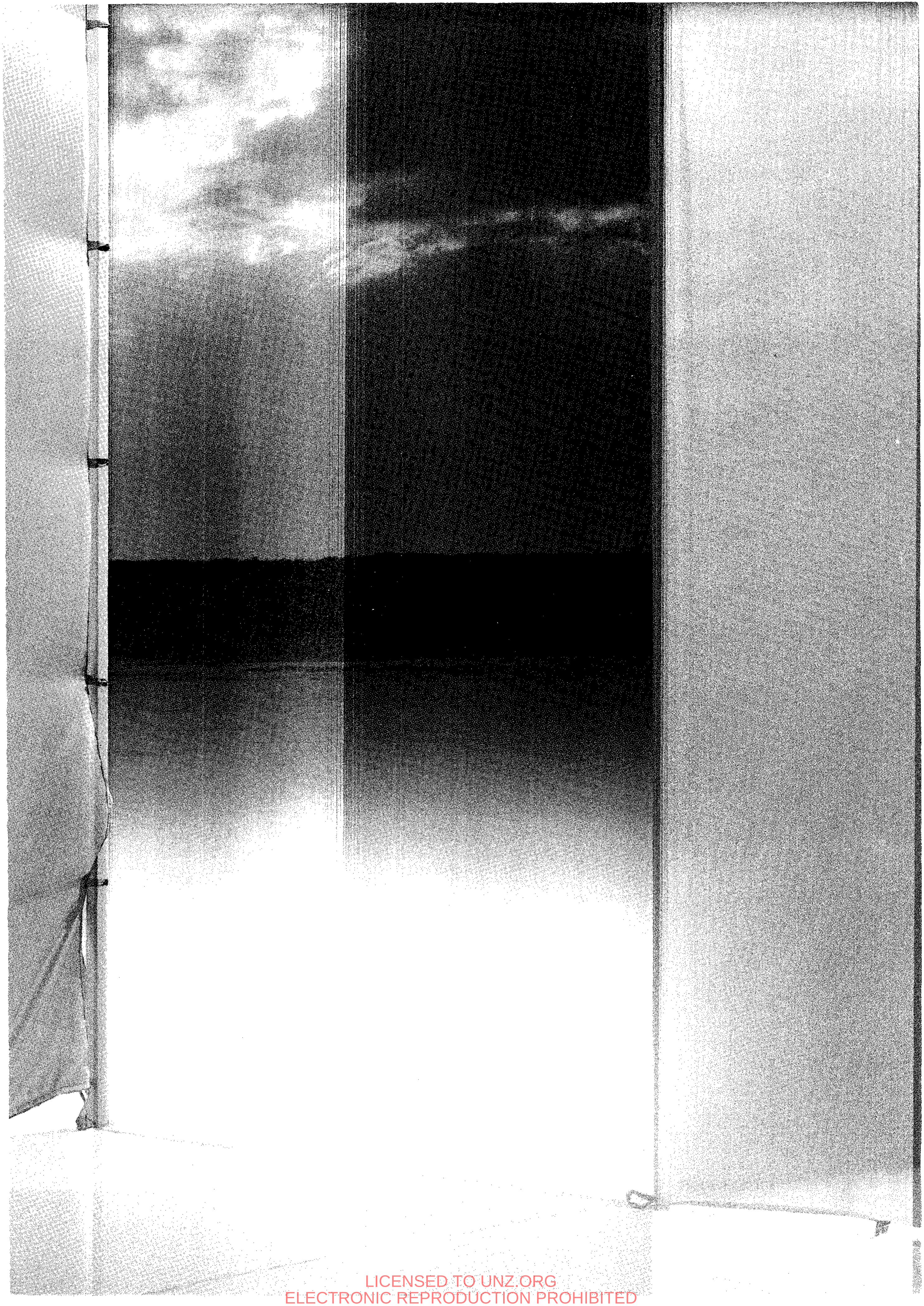

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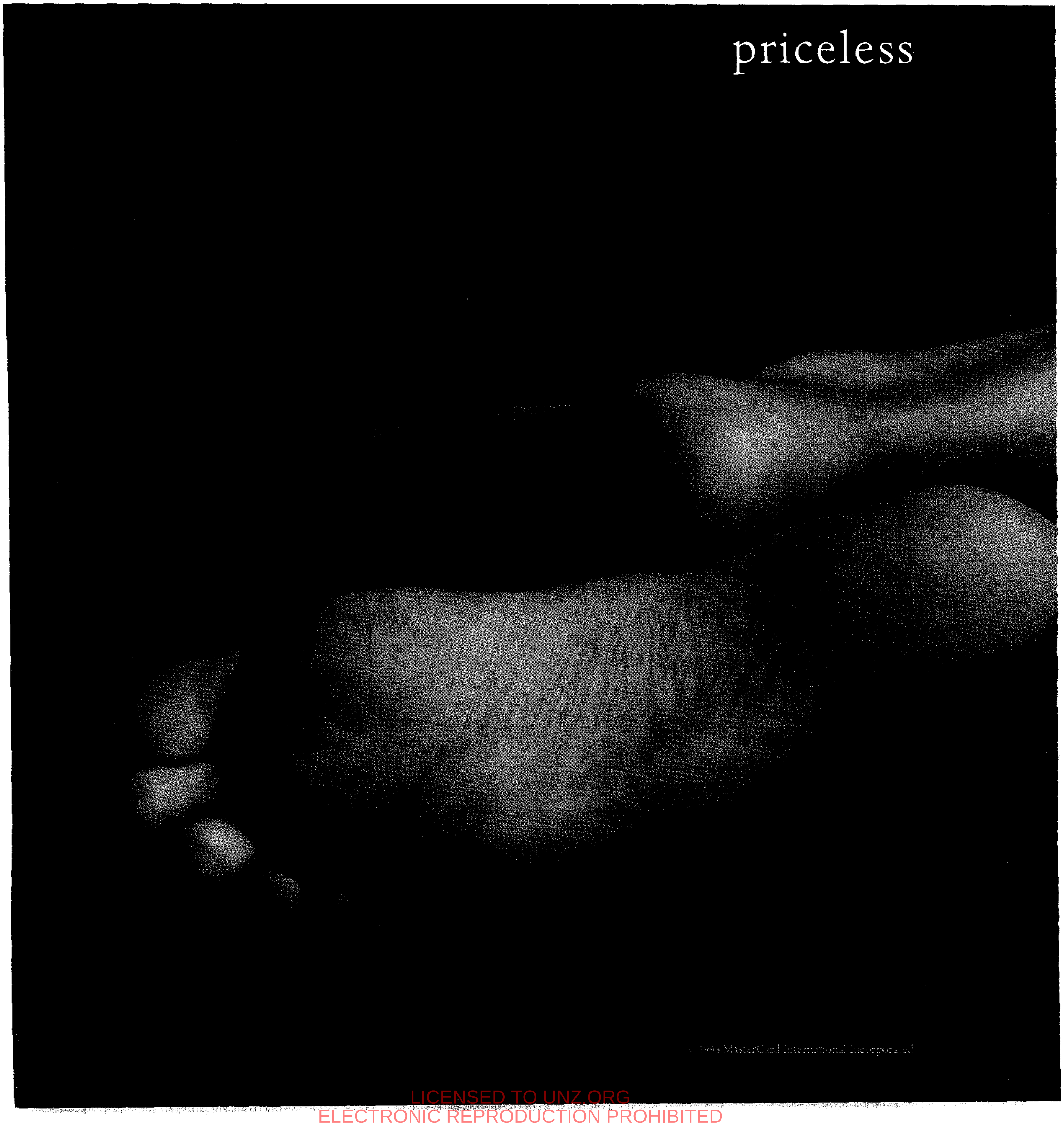

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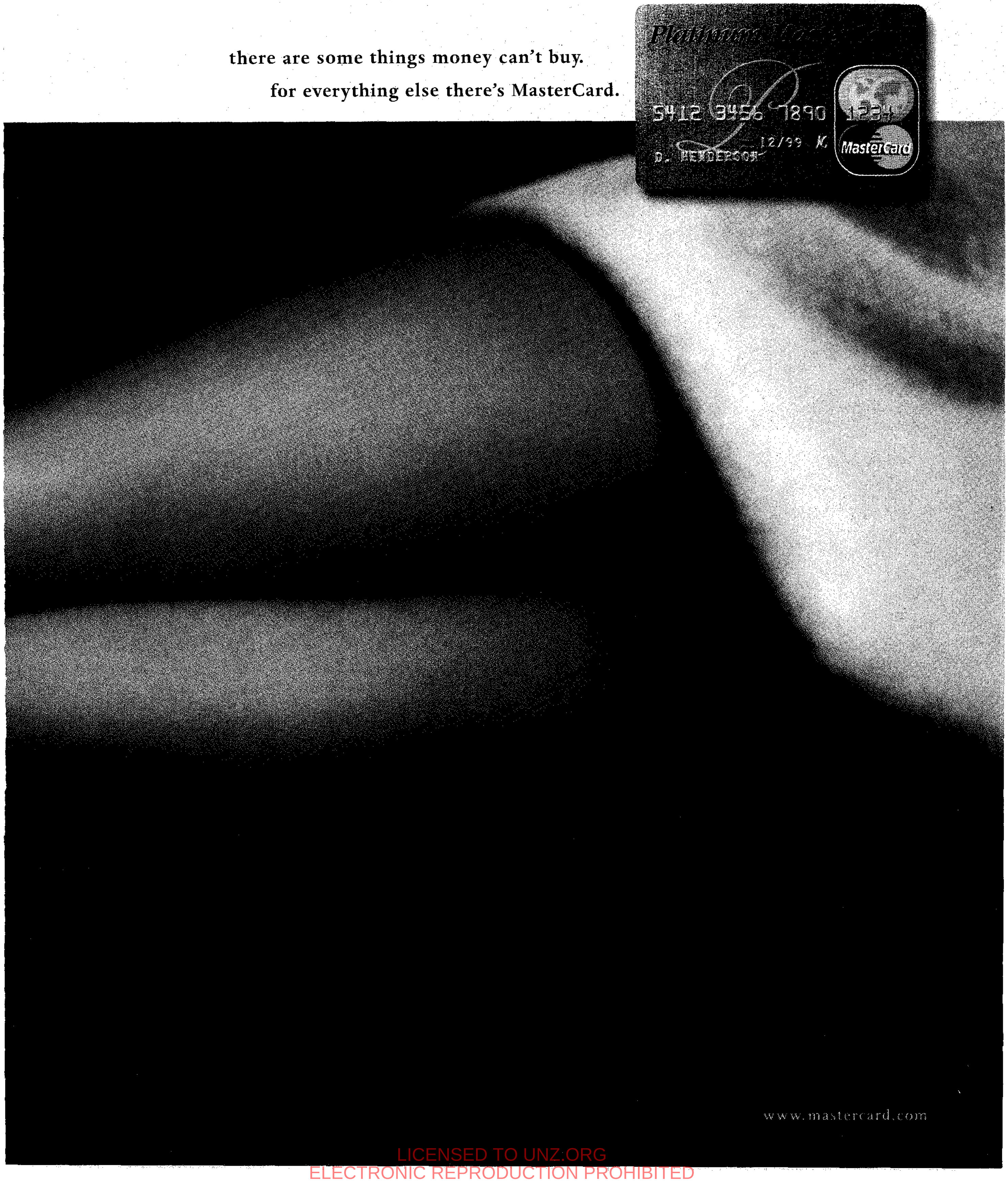
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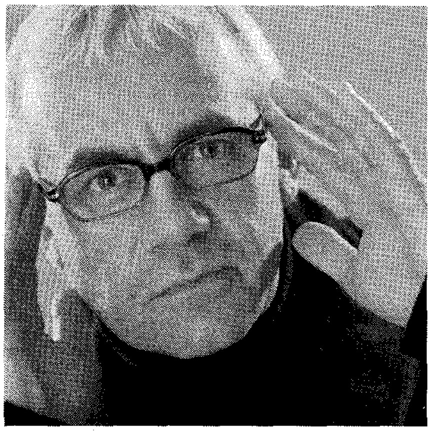

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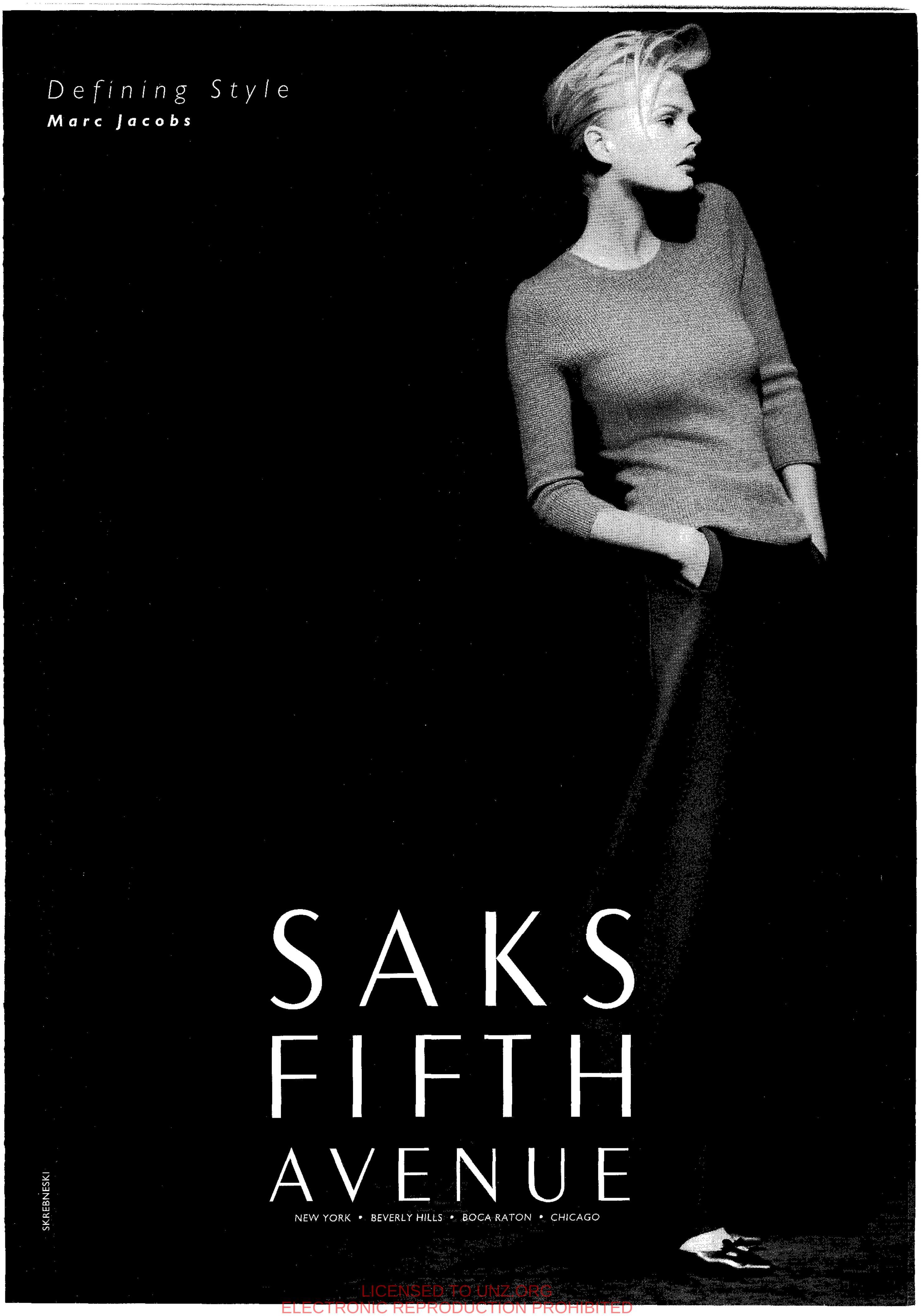
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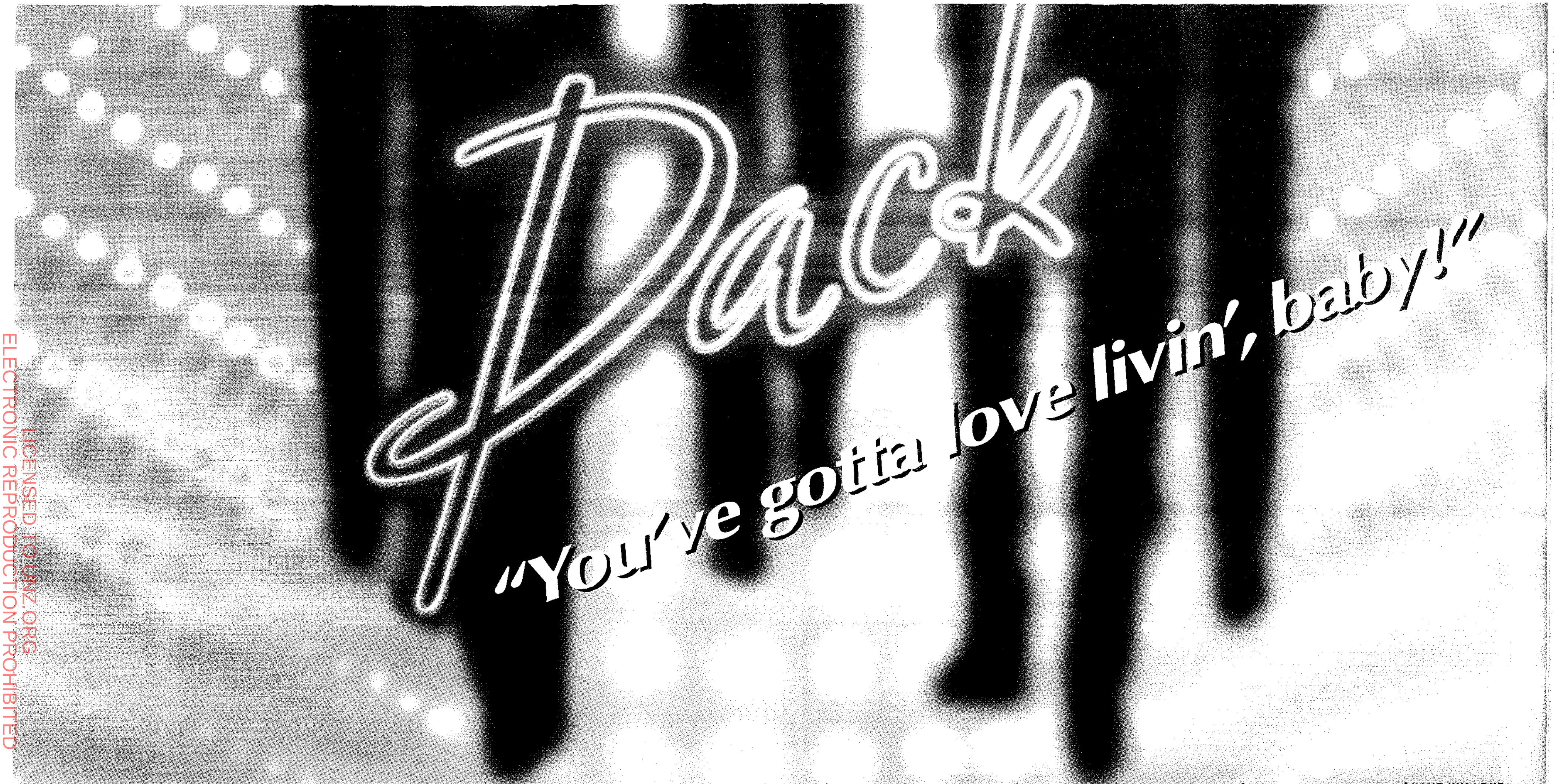
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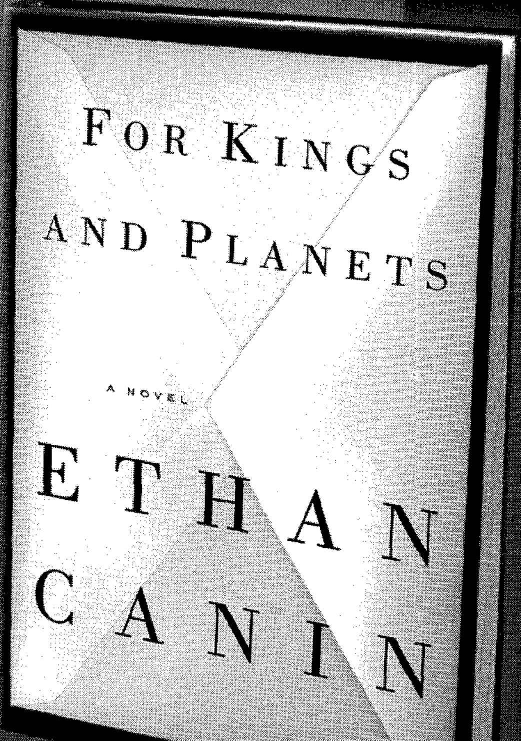

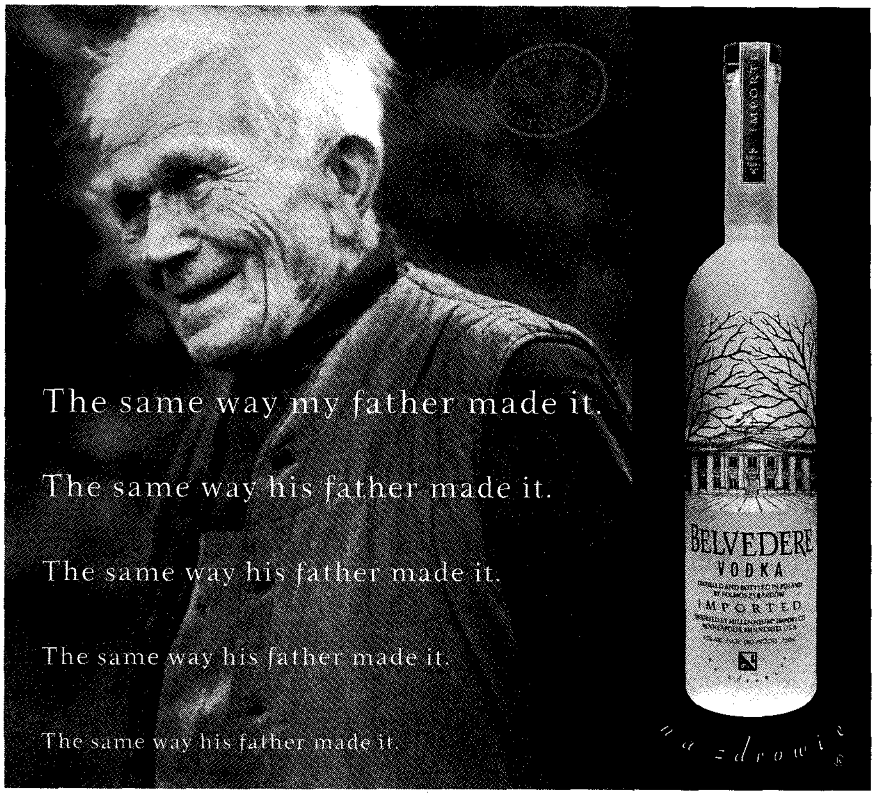
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MANUELA HOELTERHOFF ("Chasing the Anti-Diva," p. 89) is a writer and a librettist. She received a 1983 Pulitzer Prize for her cultural criticism in the *Wall Street Journal*. She lives in New York City.

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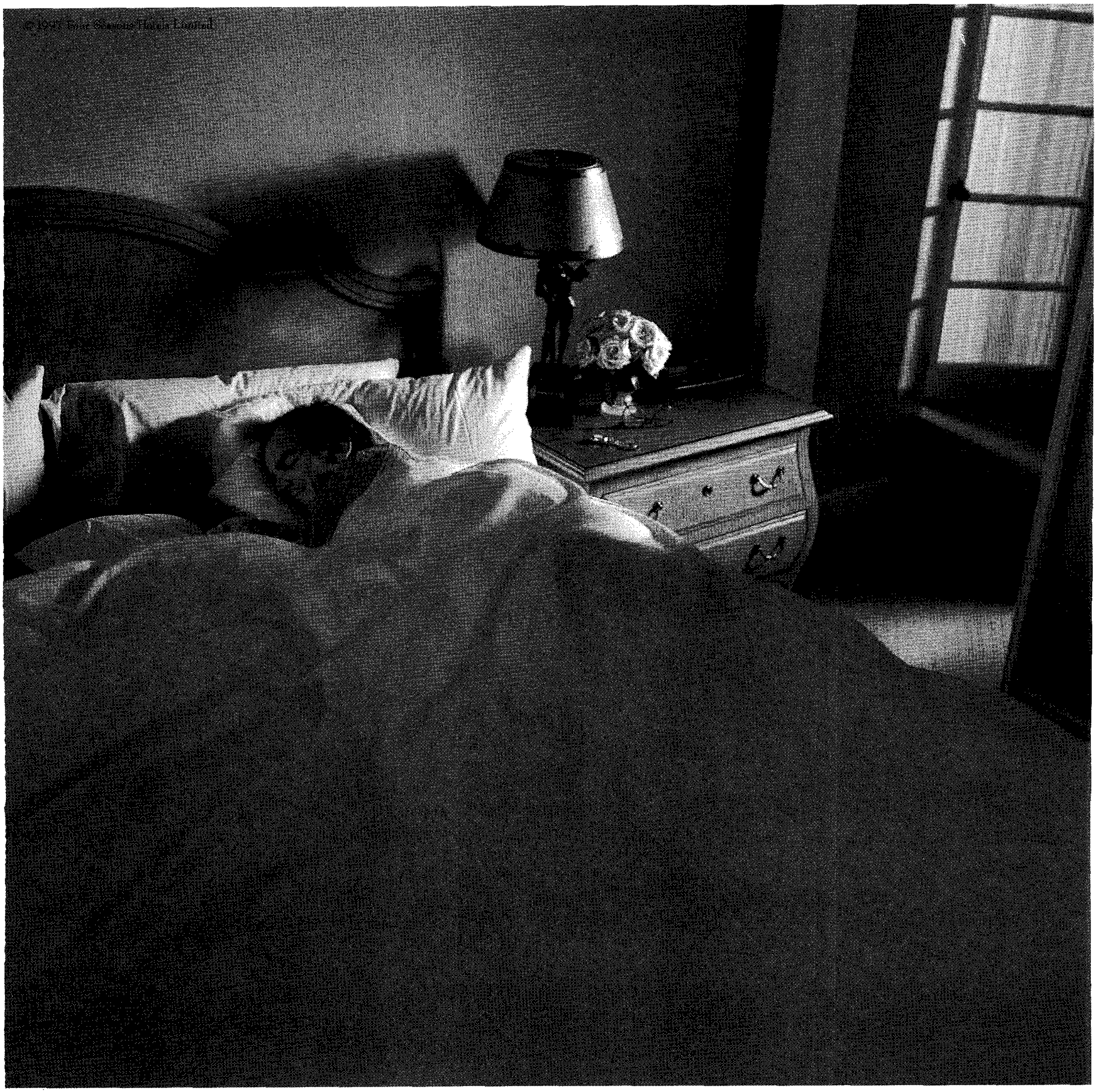
JOAN ACOCELLA (A Critic at Large, p. 144) has been a contributor to *The New Yorker* since 1992. Her edition of Vaslav Nijinsky's diary, the first complete version in English, will be published in January.

DANI SHAPIRO ("The Secret Wife," p. 80) is the author of three novels and a memoir, "Slow Motion: A True Story," which was published this month. This is her first article for the magazine. ♦

"Cancel the warm milk. I don't think I'll need it."



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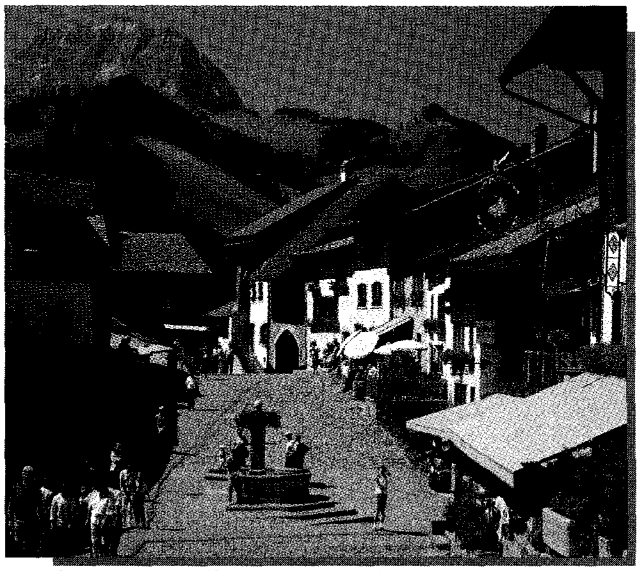

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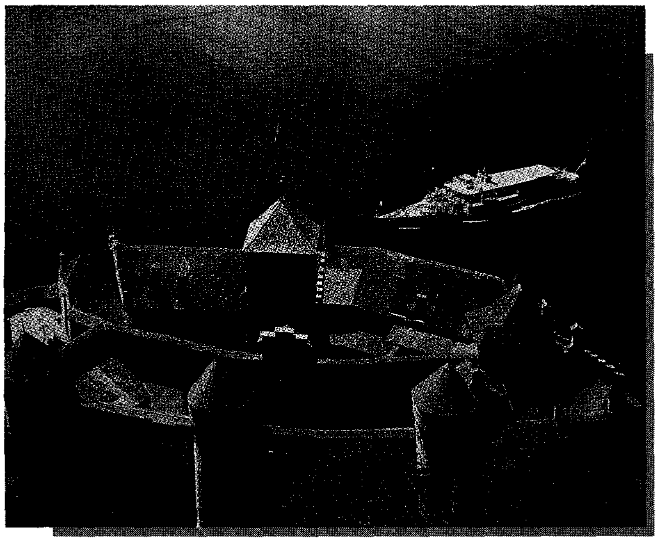

Chillon, on lake Geneva, inspired Lord Byron's poem The Prisoner of Chillon.

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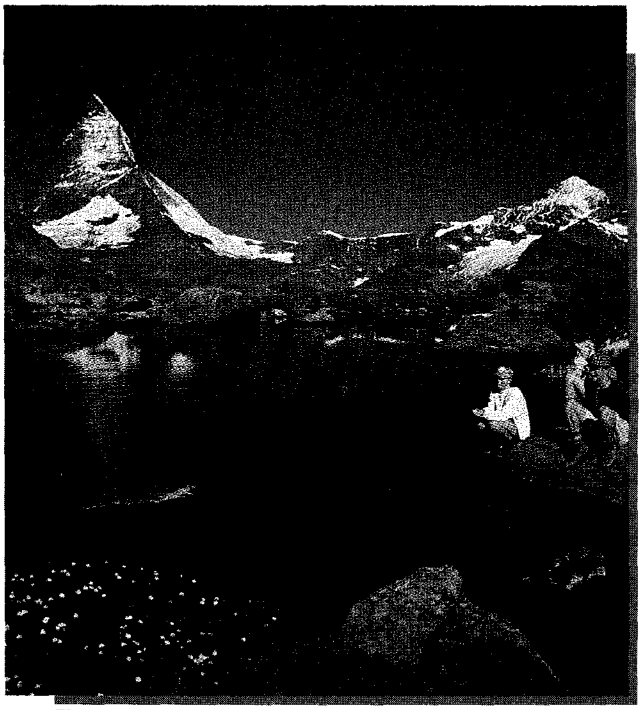

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COMMENT

SHOW AND TELL

When did privacy go public?

SOCRATES' maxim about the unexamined life not being worth living has undergone a noteworthy mutation in late-twentieth-century America. In the last few years, as the best-seller lists have seen a steady march of memoirs and biographies that tell all—or purport to tell all, or are accused of telling all—an observer of our culture could reasonably conclude that we believe that a life isn't worth living unless *everyone* examines it. The national pastime, playable in all four seasons, has become show-and-tell, and there are few among us who don't occasionally want to avert our eyes, or close them, in the hope of rediscovering, at least in our own minds, the line between private life and public exposure. There are perhaps even fewer of us, though, who can resist the temptation to re-open one eye just a little bit to sneak one more peek at the spectacle du jour. The marathon investigation into President Clinton's sexual activities has bored and overstimulated us at the same time, like bad TV. And, like bad TV, it is mesmerizing and hard to turn off. The fact is, we are not sure where we want to draw the line when it comes to knowing about other people's lives. There is the appeal of the forbidden, the lure of the closed door, the pleasure of—to use the appropriately Peeping Tom-ish lingo of the Internet—lurking. It is increasingly hard to say where our right to know ends and our desire (which we sometimes think is a need, bordering on a right) to know begins.

If there is no general agreement on what is acceptable in the civic arena, there is even more splintering of opinion when it comes to the personal sphere, where the word "inappropriate" patrols regularly, twirling its nightstick. Appropriateness is both a slippery and a sticky matter; no wonder we often don't know whether to salute or to condemn someone who flouts it. (Life is not always so confusing; sometimes it's pretty clear that a mildly irritated puzzlement is all that's called for, as in the case of an article called "A Month of Great Sex," in the latest issue of *Glamour*, by a woman who, upon realizing that she and her husband hadn't had sex in five whole days, decided to "put our loins in charge of our lives" for thirty days—and write about it. On Day 6, she tells us, "I kicked off a bout of mind-boggling sex by straddling

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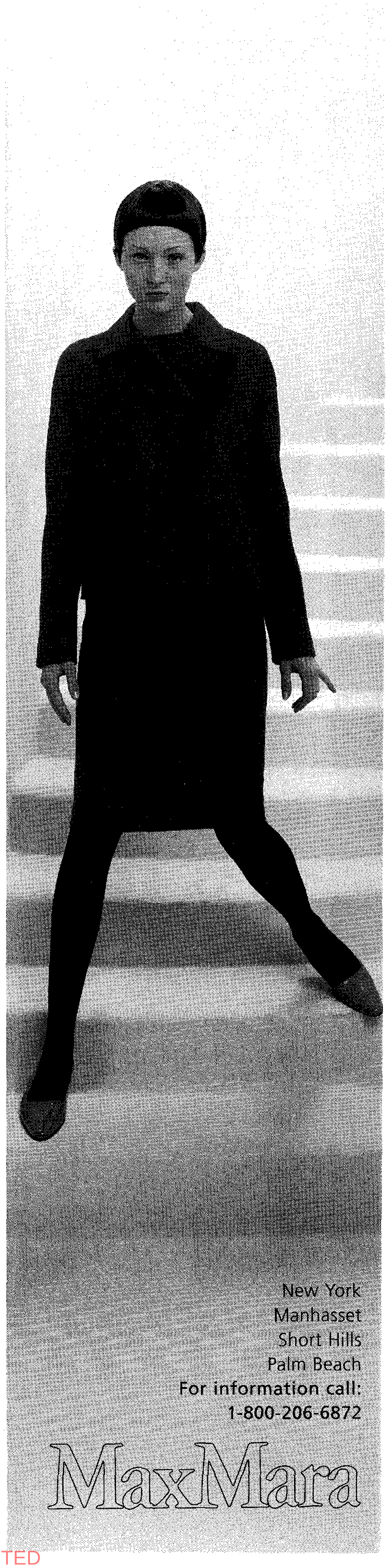

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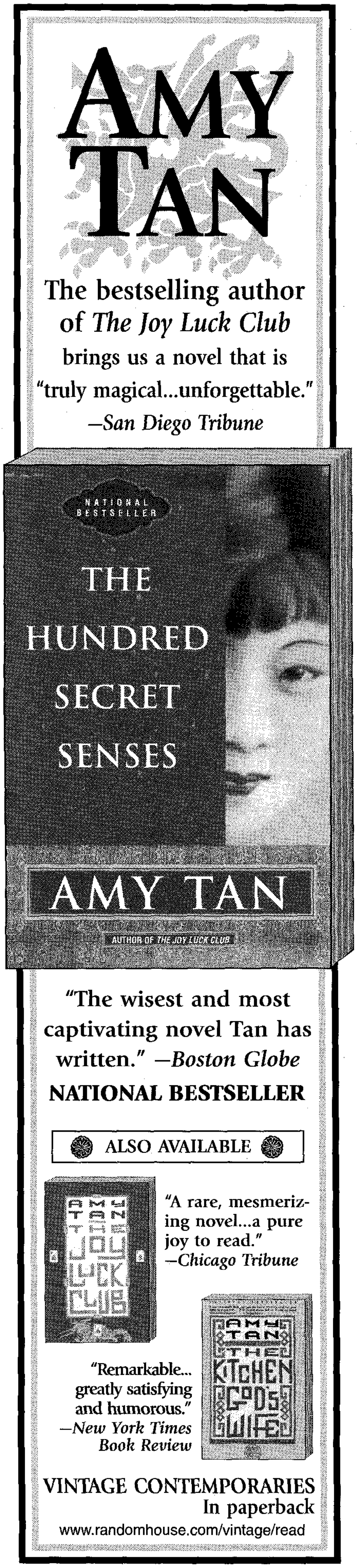
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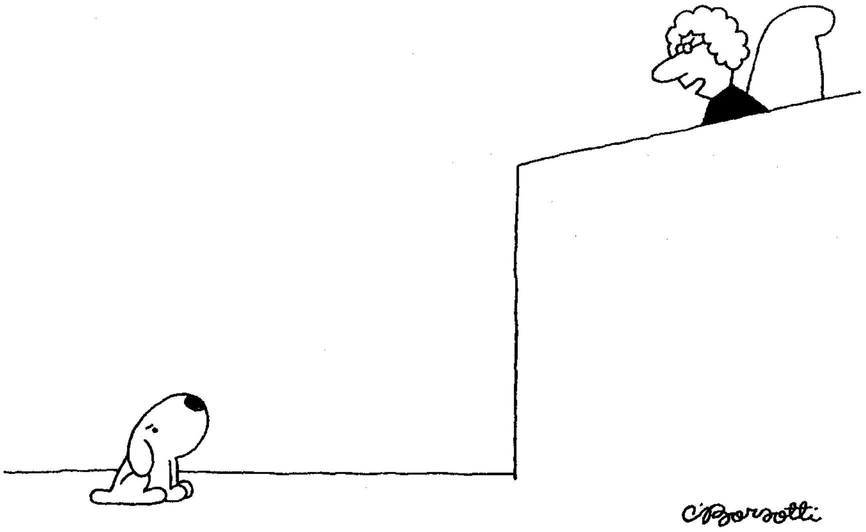

"The rug will not be sent out for lab tests."

• •

David in my black velvet bra and hot pants"—which, she adds, were "last year's Hanukkah present." Thanks for sharing.) Not only is it possible to find out just about anything about just about anybody; it's hard to avoid hearing just about everything about just about everybody. But knowing things isn't the same as having knowledge, which requires thinking and therefore takes time—the kind of time that is now called "real time," the kind that we have a perpetual shortage of. Who has time to think? Knowing things, on the other hand, is easy. You can turn on Jerry Springer and gape; you can enter tantalizing discussions in the "Private Life" section of the on-line magazine *Salon*, such as "You Won't Believe What My Ex Did"; you can spend the weekend watching reruns of Sonny Bono's funeral.

It is partly in response to this kind of levelling bombardment—perfectly exemplified in an AOL news-of-the-day teaser last week that said "Get the Scoop on Heather & the Cast of Melrose Place, Plus Latest from Africa"—that the urge to say something meaningful about real life has sprung up so hardily and stubbornly in so many people. The resulting proliferation of personal writing has struck some as overkill; confessional literature can be wearing because it is so often based on the fallacy that the unvarnished truth is the whole truth and the only truth. (It is really just another way of approximating truth.) The virtues of craft, of approaching and finishing the job with restraint and care, should not be overlooked as communicative tools in their own right: see how putting on a coat of varnish brings out the grain of the wood.

Whether we know it or not, everything we write betrays who we are: a computer program that recognizes word patterns discovered an unknown Shakespearean funeral elegy, and David Kaczynski did something that scores of federal agents couldn't accomplish in almost twenty years: he identified his brother as the Unabomber on the basis of familiar phrases that jumped out at him from the famous manifesto.

The impulse to write about one's own experience is never likely to go away, and, notwithstanding the memoir backlash, it shouldn't. More than ever, we seem to need to hear the stories of other people's lives and to share our own. Some critics have come to the unhappy conclusion that such narratives have taken the place in our lives which fiction used to occupy. There does seem to be less room in the world for fictional worlds, less opportunity for us to get outside ourselves. But think how much we have learned of *this* world from reading biographies and memoirs, and think of the pleasure they have given us: it may be that there isn't always much of a difference after all between satisfying our curiosity and igniting our imagination. —NANCY FRANKLIN

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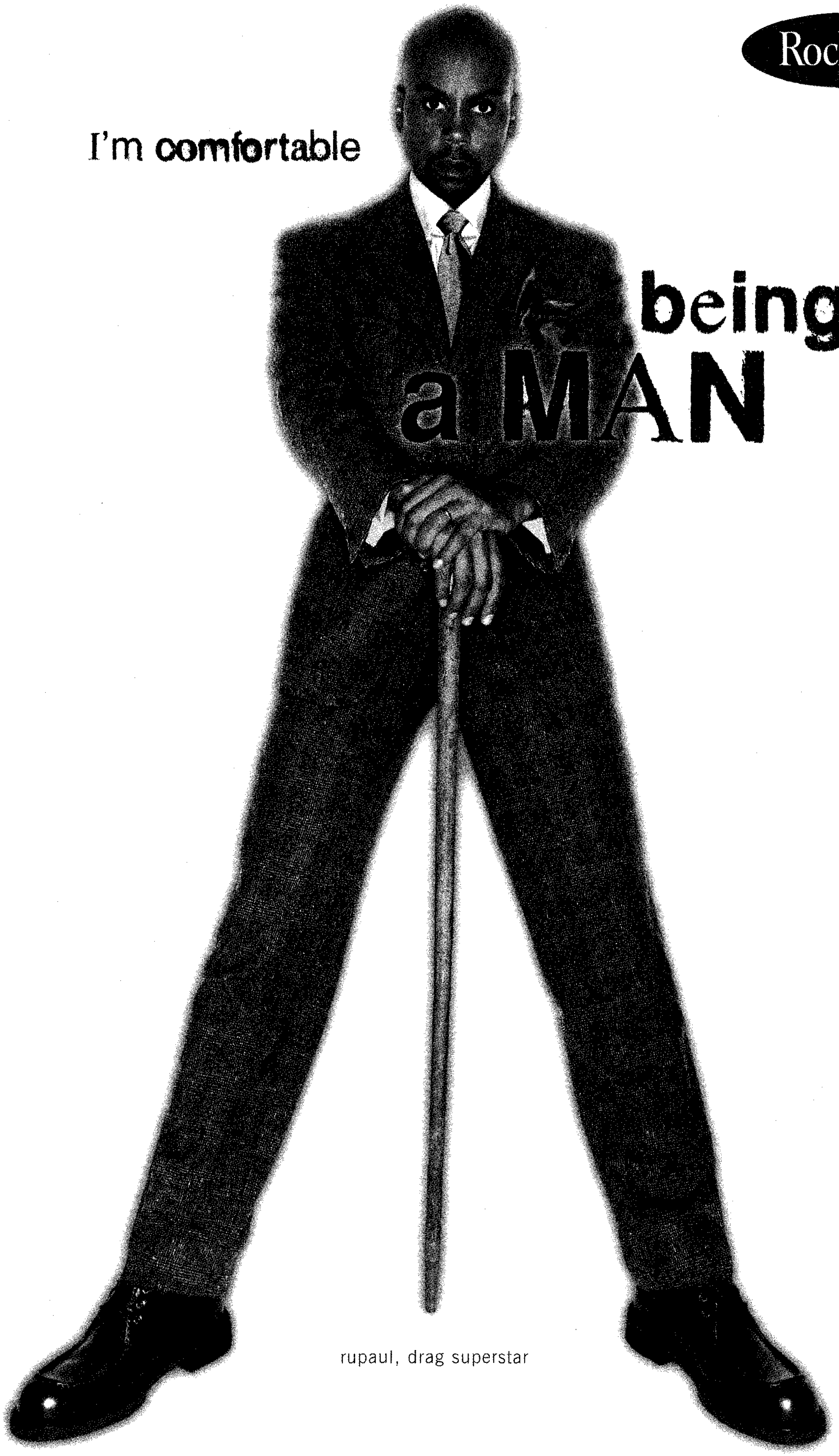

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MURDOCH AS SHE WAS

In the early nineteen-sixties, Yale's Philosophy Department invited Iris Murdoch (the subject of John Bayley's "Elegy for Iris," July 27th) to deliver three public lectures. During her stay, I was one of the faculty wives who gave a dinner party for her. Another guest, a Yale professor who was tall and very attractive, and had been much admired when one of his short stories was published in *Esquire*, sidled over to Iris, gave his name, and asked, "And what should I call you?" She looked him up and down for several long seconds and replied, "Miss Murdoch, I think."

DOROTHY PRELINGER
New Haven, Conn.

UNDERSTANDING THE WAR

In his discussion of "Saving Private Ryan," the Steven Spielberg film ("Theatre of War," July 27th), Hendrik Hertzberg writes that "many of the Wehrmacht troops at Normandy were Estonians or Poles serving under German noncommissioned officers." This statement deserves clarification, since Germans killed millions of Poles during the Second World War.

I served as a member of the 1st Polish Armored Division, which fought in Normandy to liberate Europe. (Poland's government-in-exile also had an army corps in the Italian campaign, an air force and a navy based in Britain, and a paratroop brigade that fought at Arnhem.) I never came across any Polish units or volunteers under German command in Normandy or elsewhere. Some Poles (particularly those in the area of Poland that had been annexed to the Reich in 1939) were conscripted by the Germans, as German citizens; they often surrendered to the Allies at the first opportunity. For Poland at war, this forcible conscription was another cross to bear.

JACEK GALAZKA
New York City

Mr. Hertzberg quotes Mr. Spielberg as saying that the Second World War "has not really been explored on film except with ulterior motives." But HBO's recent original movie "When Trumpets Fade," about terrified, barely trained Americans fighting the Germans in the war's last days, seemed to me to be morally ambiguous: in a scene before battle, the men's nervous banter fades into gloom over their impossible situation; there's a sense throughout that all the characters, even the "heroes," would rather be someplace else; and the battle scenes themselves graphically illustrate the countless horrible ways that people die. The movie left me in total agreement with William Tecumseh Sherman, who, after surveying the carnage of the battle of Shiloh, said, "The scenes on this field would have cured anybody of war."

LEIGH FITZPATRICK
Truckee, Calif.

NO CHOICE

Daphne Merkin, in her review of two new "gay films" ("Pretty in Purple," July 27th), writes that "to be gay is still a problematic, if not tortured, choice—or so the movies that reach mainstream audiences would have us believe." Merkin goes on to question the words "problematic" and "tortured" but not the idea that homosexuality is a "choice." Granted, there's nothing wrong with choosing to be gay, but for the overwhelming majority of us, who had no choice and simply *are* gay, the use of the word "choice" is regressive and insulting.

DAVID MORDEN
Seattle, Wash.

CORRECTION: In an article on the Amish, "Bad Seeds" (July 20th), the location of Philadelphia's United States District Court was given incorrectly. It is situated at the corner of Sixth and Market Streets.

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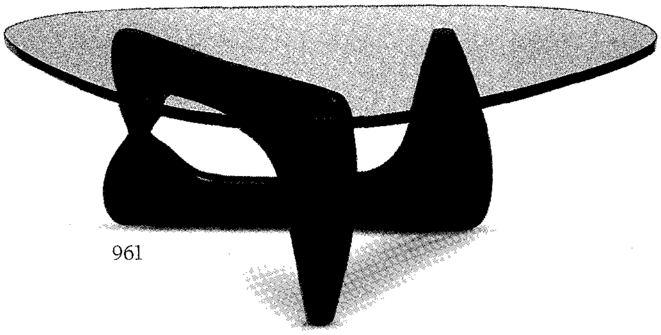

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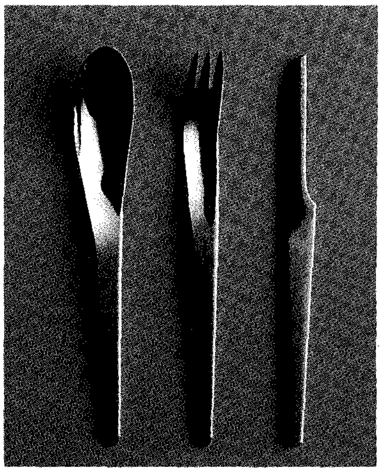
962. **Arne Jacobsen. Cutlery.** 1957. Stainless steel. Knife 8½" (21.5cm) long; fork 8½" (21.5 cm) long; spoon 8⅜" (21.3 cm) long. Gift of Georg Jensen Silversmiths.



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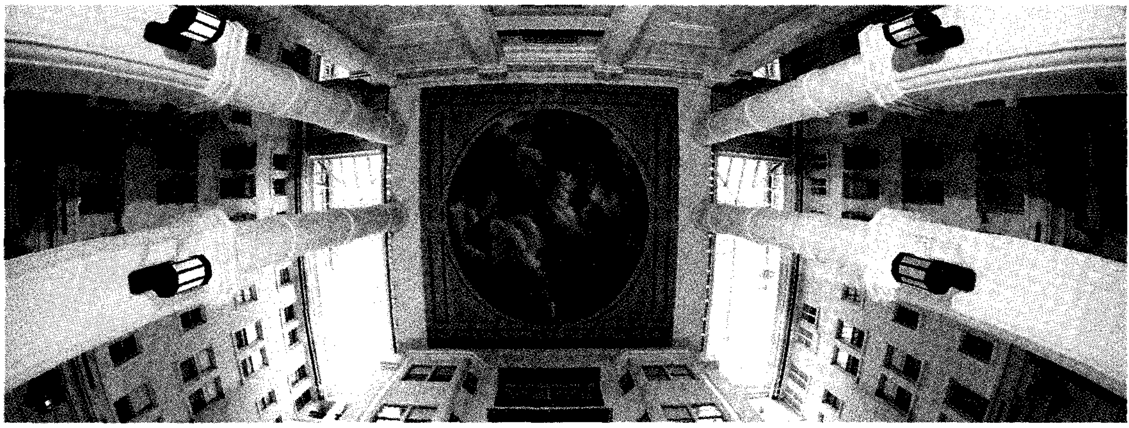
963. **Park Hyatt Hotel. Atrium.** 1903. 7 stories. 4 telescoped columns. Juliet balconies carved from concrete. Oil-based fresco that would have made Michelangelo himself look up. Twin arching plate-glass skylights that flood all atrium suites with enough light to fill your complimentary flute of champagne with infinite sparkles. The Park Hyatt collection: Los Angeles, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Washington D.C. and Chicago (2000). Buenos Aires, Canberra, Johannesburg, London, Madrid, Sydney and Tokyo. (Reservations: 1 800 233 1234) The Park Hyatt. Classic. Modern. Luxury.



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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	1				

THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

Bread and Butter—Playwrights Theatre presents Eugene O'Neill's early play, as part of a festival examining the playwright's œuvre. Previews Aug. 21-22 and Aug. 28-30. Opens Sept. 1 at 7:30 and continues through Sept. 11. (Provincetown Playhouse, 133 MacDougal St. 279-4200.)

Communicating Doors—Mary-Louise Parker, Patricia Hodges, and David McCallum star in Alan Ayckbourn's comic thriller, set in London in 1978, 1998, and 2018, in which two women travel in time to change their fate. Preview on Aug. 19. Opens Aug. 20 at 7. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 13th St. 239-6200.)

Deep Down—Ruben Santiago-Hudson stars in a drama by Doug Grissom, set in the South in 1963, about a black ex-convict and his white employer. In previews Aug. 25-30. Opens Aug. 31 at 8 and continues through Sept. 12. (INTAR, 420 W. 42nd St. 935-9430, ext. 10.)

If I Were You—3-Legged Dog's latest multimedia production, a crime story incorporating elements of English farce and French melodrama. Aug. 26-29 at 8. Continues through Sept. 12. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793.)

New York International Fringe Festival—A fortnight of experimental, multidisciplinary, and multimedia performances at numerous venues which includes New York City's Ben Munisteri (in "Late Night Sugar Flight"), Singapore's Action Theatre (in "Mail Order Brides and Other Oriental Take-Aways"), and Philadelphia's Brat Productions (in "The Bald Soprano"). Aug. 19-30. (For tickets, performance times, and information about other events, call 307-0229 or 888-374-6436.)

Nijinsky Speaks—A one-man memory play, written and performed by Leonard Crofoot, in which the celebrated dancer looks back on his life from the confines of an insane asylum. Previews Aug. 21-23. Opens Aug. 24 at 8. (Harold Clurman, 412 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.)

Stupid Kids—The WPA Theatre's production of John C. Russell's dark comedy of suburban-teen angst reopens Aug. 25 at the Century Theatre. Michael Mayer is the director. (111 E. 15th St. 239-6200.)

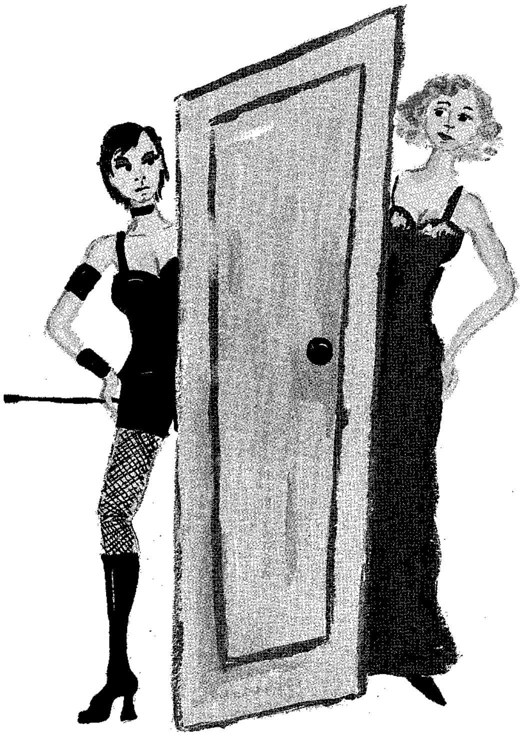
OPENED RECENTLY

Art—Yasmina Reza's farce is a splendid vehicle for three masterly actors, Victor Garber, Alan Alda, and Alfred Molina. They portray friends whose fifteen-year relationship is threatened when one of them buys a large white canvas for two hundred thousand francs. Directed by Matthew Warchus. (Reviewed in our issue of 3/23/98.) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Beauty Queen of Leenane—The precocious Anglo-Irish playwright Martin McDonagh's riveting winter's tale, set in a rural Irish cottage, about an aged mother and her virgin forty-year-old daughter, who is trapped in a punishing solitude. It's a simple, primitive story, yet it is filled with complex emotional surprises and reversals. (3/16/98) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Capitol Steps—The troupe of former congressional aides and interns presents its latest political-comedy revue, "Unzippin' My Doo-Dah and Other National Priorities." (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

Collected Stories—Uta Hagen stars as a mentor to a young novelist, in Donald Margulies's 1997 drama. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)



Mary-Louise Parker and Patricia Hodges, in Alan Ayckbourn's "Communicating Doors."

ELIZA GRAN

Conduct of a Tin Man—The Ontological Theatre presents a play by Anne de Mare and Randall Jaynes, about "an isolated man embittered by rust and addicted to oil." (St. Mark's-in-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 533-4650. Closes Aug. 22.)

Cymbeline—Andrei Serban is the director of the New York Shakespeare Festival's second outdoor production of the season. (Delacorte Theatre, Central Park near W. 81st St. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 539-8750. Closes Aug. 30.)

Dinah Was—Oliver Goldstick's play about the late blues singer Dinah Washington, starring Lillias White. (Gramercy Theatre, 127 E. 23rd St. 307-4100.)

The Erotica Project—A collection of monologues about sex, written by Lillian Ann Slugocki, Erin Cressida Wilson, John Patrick Shanley, and Laurie Stone. Aug. 21-22 and Aug. 28-29 at 10:30. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202.)

An Evening with Jerry Herman—The songwriter ("Hello, Dolly!," "Mame") stars with Lee Roy Reams and Florence Lacey in a revue of his own songs. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

High Society—This musical, based on Philip Barry's play "The Philadelphia Story" and the subsequent movie "High Society," has all the kick of flat champagne. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Hundreds of Sisters & One BIG Brother—A one-woman show by Deborah Swisher, about her black-Jewish childhood in a Berkeley commune. Wednesdays at 8, through Sept. 2. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202.)

The Irish . . . and How They Got That Way—This revue by Frank McCourt, author of the best-selling memoir "Angela's Ashes," is a generally good-natured if somewhat choppy amalgam of historical tidbits, quotations from letters and speeches, and Irish songs from the past two centuries. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737. Closes Sept. 6.)

Jean Cocteau Rep—The company opens the season with Sartre's "No Exit." (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

Larry and the Werewolf—A noir comedy written by Jeff Goode and staged, as a Saturday-night serial, by the Adobe Theatre Company. Aug. 22 and Aug 29 at 8 and 10. (Flea Theatre, 41 White St. 924-0077. Closes Aug. 29.)

The Last Empress—A musical about Korea's travails at the turn of the century and about Queen Min, who tried to save the country (she was made empress posthumously, having been assassinated by the Japanese). The production, brought to New York by the Korean company A-Com, has spectacular sets and costumes (by Dong Woo Park and Hyun Sook Kim) and some powerful

BANANA REPUBLIC
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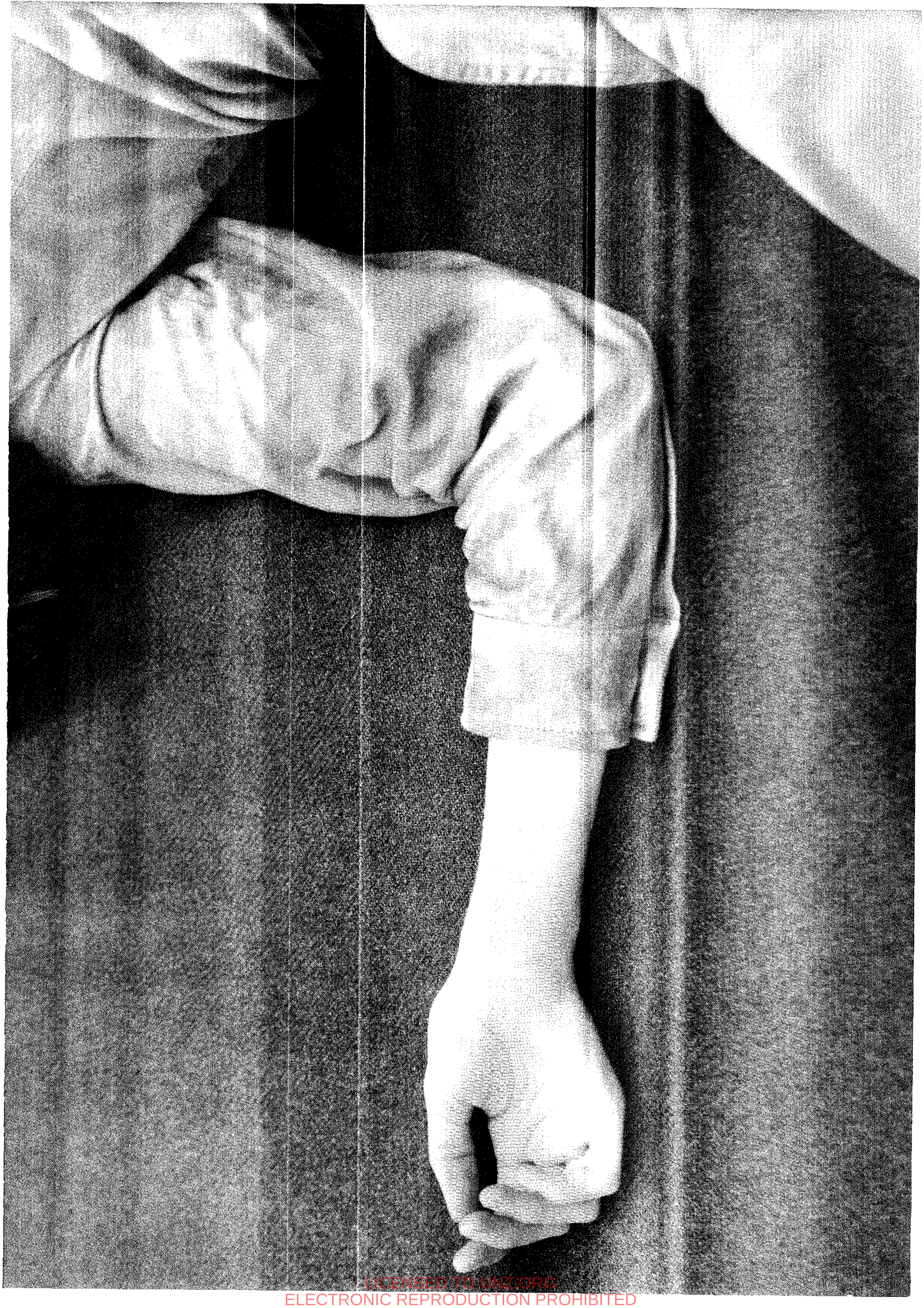

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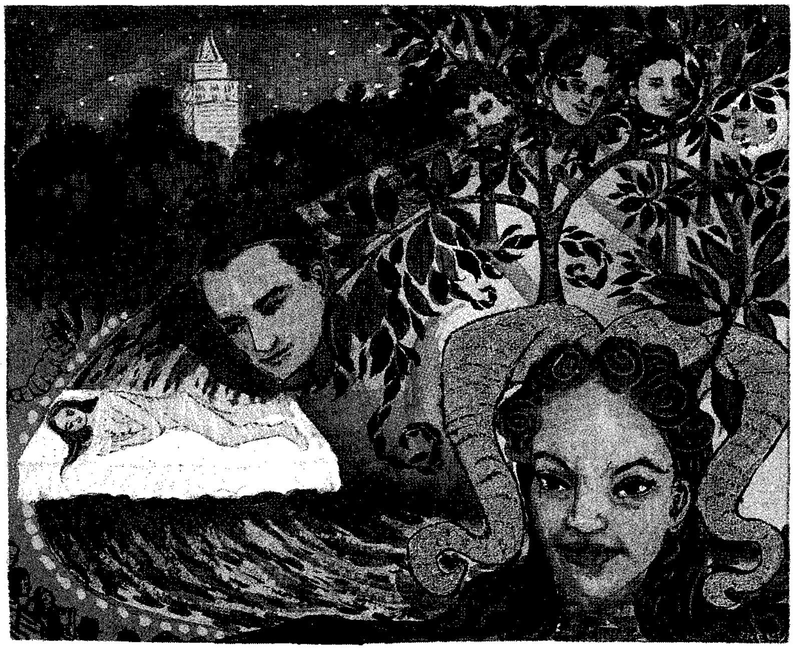
performances—notably Sung Hoon Lee as the Regent and Wonjung Kim as the Queen (she alternates with Taewom Yi Kim). Neither the book nor the lyrics offer much insight, and the music is, for the most part, workmanlike, but as the telling of a national story this production is stirring. Performances are in Korean with English supertitles. (New York State Theatre. 307-4100. Closes Aug. 23.)

Miss Coco Peru's Liquid Universe—A heartfelt series of how-I-got-this-way vignettes written and performed by Miss Coco Peru, otherwise known as Clinton Leupp. The show is occasionally syrupy, but Miss Coco's self-aware and self-lacerating humor and her engaging way with a story make this a winning evening. Sundays at 8. (Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. 741-0391.)

A New Brain—A new musical by William Finn ("Falsettos") and James Lapine, about a songwriter awaiting surgery. Graciela Daniele is the director. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Nunsense A-Men—An all-male version of Dan Goggin's 1985 musical comedy, "Nunsense." (47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

PeregriNasyon—The Ma-Yi Theatre begins its tenth season with Chris B. Millado's drama, which traces the lives of a group of Filipino migrant workers during the thirties. (Theatre Row Theatre, 424 W. 42nd St. 581-8896. Closes Aug. 30.)



The New York Shakespeare Festival's production of "Cymbeline."

IRENE HARDWICKE

The Pillars of Society—The Century Center's Ibsen series opens with a brief engagement of the playwright's drama about a hypocritical businessman. (111 E. 15th St. 982-6782, ext. 30. Closes Aug. 23.)

Playstation, Levels 1-4—Judy Elkan's comedy examines the days and nights of three downtown glamour girls. (Excellent Art Manufacturing, 86 Forsyth St. 414-5167.)

Power Plays—Three short plays, two written by Elaine May and one by Alan Arkin, who perform them with Jeannie Berlin and Anthony Arkin, their respective offspring. All of the plays are too long, but the comic brilliance of May and Arkin père (who also directed) is worth, at a rough estimate, ten million times the price of admission. Presented by Manhattan Theatre Club. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313. Closes Sept. 6.)

Sakina's Restaurant—Aasif Mandvi portrays six characters in his one-man exploration of the South Asian community in New York. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

Side Man—The Roundabout Theatre presents Warren Leight's drama, which was staged earlier this year Off Broadway. It's a nostalgic but never sappy paean to the musical obsessiveness and worldly indifference of mid-century big-band musicians, cleverly structured as the recollections of one musician's put-upon son. Solidly directed by Michael Mayer. (Broadway at 45th St. 719-1300. Closes Sept. 6.)

Smoke on the Mountain—In this sweet and funny musical comedy, set on a Saturday night in June, 1938, the Mount Pleasant (North Carolina) Baptist Church awaits the arrival of the Sanders Family singers and musicians. The show features Mike Craver and Mark Hardwick's tuneful, often bluegrass arrangements of songs like "Bringing in the Sheaves," "I'll Fly Away," and "Rock of Ages." (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

The Sound of Music—Rebecca Luker is enormously winning as Maria, and the seven children in the cast are mostly delightful, but the production doesn't linger in the memory; there may be music in those hills, but the producers didn't seem to find a whole lot of fresh air up there. (4/6/98) (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Symphonie Fantastique—Abstract puppets underwater, set to the music of Berlioz. This isn't rubber-duckie performance art; just as dance can make space a palpable presence onstage, the show's creator, Basil Twist, uses feathers, streamers, mirrors, bubbles, and sophisticated lighting to do the same for water. And, as in dance, the movement illuminates the music. A peerless, delightful summer evening. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202. Closes Aug. 30.)

The Tramway End—A drama by the Irish playwright Dermot Bolger, originally seen at Dublin's Gate Theatre, about an Irish expatriate living in Germany. (Chelsea Playhouse, 125 W. 22nd St. 388-2806.)

Twelfth Night—Get thee to Lincoln Center, for Nicholas Hytner's absolutely magical staging of Shakespeare's comedy. To single out any one member of the cast for praise would be wrong, and criticism would seem like nitpicking in the face of so much fun. The only wrong note struck is the traditional curtain call: much of the applause is for the extraordinary work of Bob Crowley (sets), Natasha Katz (lighting), Catherine Zuber (costumes), Jeanine Tesori (music), and Scott Stauffer (sound), none of whom are there to take a bow. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Closes Aug. 30.)

Villa Villa—Theatre as mosh pit. The Argentinean troupe De La Guarda herds you into a crowded space, performs undistinguished rock music, swings on ropes over your head, and splashes you until you're drenched. (Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E., at 15th St. 239-6200.)

When I Was a Girl, I Used to Scream and Shout—A dark coming-of-age comedy by Sharman Macdonald, set in Scotland in the fifties and sixties. (John Montgomery, 134 W. 26th St. 627-7076. Closes Aug. 29.)

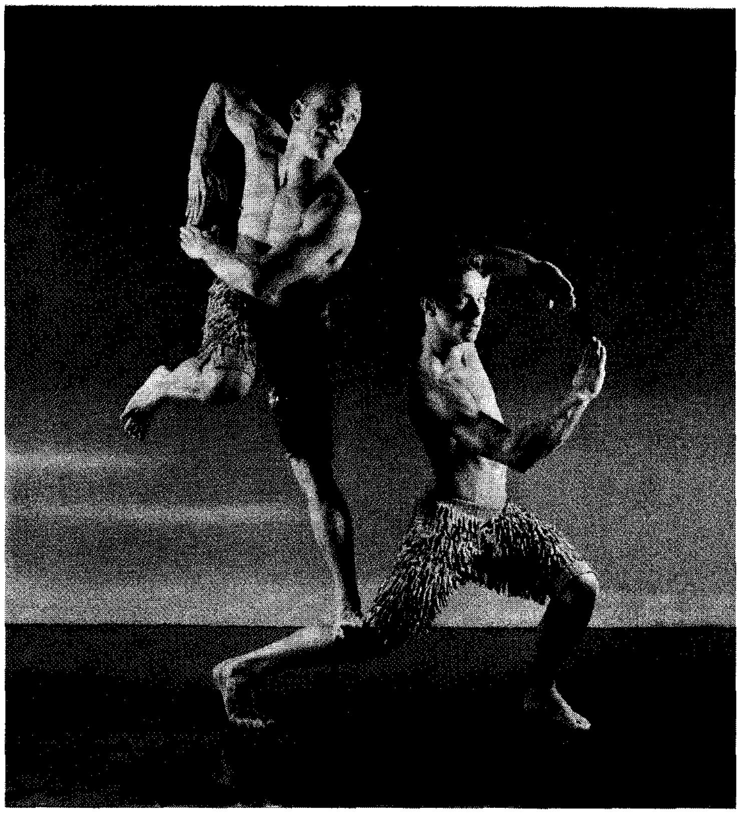
You Never Can Tell—A summer treat from the Roundabout Theatre Company. In Shaw's early comedy, a young dentist (the wry and handsome Robert Sean Leonard) tries to romantically outwit an ostensibly modern turn-of-the-century woman (Katie Finneran) but ends up succumbing to her inherently old-fashioned ways. Allen Moyer's seaside-resort set is lovely, as are Michael Krass's costumes, and the cast is super. It would have been a better day at the beach, though, had the director, Nicholas Martin, toned down Catherine Kellner and Saxon Palmer, whose precocious-siblings act seems more suited to Looney Tunes. (Broadway at 45th St. 719-1300. Closes Aug. 30.)

LONG RUNS

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST: Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **BRING IN DA NOISE, BRING IN DA FUNK:** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CHICAGO:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY STRIKES BACK!:** Stardust, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200. . . . **GROSS INDECENCY: THE THREE TRIALS OF OSCAR WILDE:** Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000. . . . **HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH:** Jane Street Theatre, Hotel Riverview Ballroom, 113 Jane St. 239-6200. . . . **I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE:** Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200. . . . **JEKYLL & HYDE:** Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **LATE-NITE CATECHISM:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE LION KING:** New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **RAGTIME:** Ford Center for the Performing Arts, 213 W. 42nd St. 307-4100. . . . **R & J:** John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 354-2220. . . . **RENT:** Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000. . . . **THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL:** Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100. . . . **SECRETS EVERY SMART TRAVELER SHOULD KNOW:** Triad, 158 W. 72nd St. 799-4599. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **TITANIC:** Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200. . . . **A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE:** Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100. (Closes Sept. 5.) . . . **VISITING MR. GREEN:** Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 505-0700.

DANCE

Lincoln Center Out-of-Doors—Aug. 20 at 6: Maia Claire Garrison and M'Zawa Dance and Anita Gonzalez and Bandana Women present premières and works in progress. (Fountain Plaza.) . . . ¶ Aug. 20-21 at 8: The José Limón Dance Company appears in three pieces from the repertory and two works by resident choreographer Donald McKayle, "Heartbeats" and an excerpt from "Blood Memories." (Damrosch Park.) . . . ¶ Aug. 27 at 5:30: Dance Alloy of Pittsburgh. (Fountain Plaza.) . . . ¶ Aug. 28 at 6: Soweto Street Beat. (Fountain Plaza.) . . . ¶ Aug. 30 at 4: The choreographer Merian Soto and the Pepatian company present their own blend of salsa and



Mark Dendy and Lawrence Keigwin as twin Nijinskys, in "Dream Analysis," at Dance Theatre Workshop.

cock fight in "Pelea de Gallos." (Fountain Plaza.) (For rain dates and festival schedule, call 875-5108. No tickets necessary.)

"Dream Analysis"—The prolific choreographer Mark Dendy came up with his fifteen-character, full-length Freudian dance comedy after he stumbled upon a New Age workbook for artists who are stuck. "One of the assignments was to write three pages a day. I thought, I'm an artist. I don't need to make collages! But I did it." The result—a rollicking sendup of the memoir form which includes duelling Martha Grahams and twin Nijinskys, four plot lines, and the freewheeling logic of dreams—premièred this past January at the Altogether Different festival and opens the fall season at Dance Theatre Workshop. "It still awes me," says Dendy, a onetime resident of Weaverville, North Carolina. "I mean, what would Mom even think?" (219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Aug. 27-29 and Sept. 1 at 8 and Aug. 30 at 3. Through Sept. 12.)

Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo—The company's slate of all-male, multi-gender works includes Robert LaFosse's version of "Stars and Stripes"; "Le Lac des Cygnes," starring Mikhail Mypansarov as Benno and Margeaux Mundeyn as Odette; and other classic travesties. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Aug. 17-21 at 8, Aug. 22 at 2 and 8, and Aug. 23 at 7:30.)

Celebrate Brooklyn!—The choreographer Abdel R. Salaam and his twenty-two-member troupe Forces of Nature perform "Cult of Wolves," "Passion Fruit," "Rhythm Tree," and "October Ashes." (Prospect Park Bandshell, Prospect Park W. at 9th St. Aug. 21 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

OUT OF TOWN

Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival—Aug. 18-20 at 8, Aug. 21 at 8:30, and Aug. 22 at 2 and 8:30: Tharp!, Twyla Tharp's latest dance company. . . . ¶ Aug. 20-21 at 8:15 and Aug. 22-23 at 5: Urban Bush Women. . . . ¶ Aug. 25-26 and Aug. 28-29 at 7: Zaccho Dance Theatre. (Becket, Mass. For information about tickets, call 413-243-0745.)

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

"Mamaloshen"—The singer-actor Mandy Patinkin performs a selection of Yiddish songs, accompanied by violinist Saeka Matsuyama and pianist Eric Stern. (Angel Orensanz Foundation Center for the Arts, 172 Norfolk St., at E. Houston St. 431-8102. Aug. 19 and Aug. 22 at 2 and Aug. 19-22 at 8.)

Lincoln Center Out-of-Doors—The final weeks of the festival's free alfresco performances. Aug. 19 at 6:30: Horace Tapscott. An unexpected pleasure of the past few years has been the emergence of the West Coast-based pianist, composer, and onetime avant-garde big-band leader Tapscott, who has been virtually unheard in these parts. He's an accomplished, forthright, and comfortably modern player. (North Plaza.) . . . ¶ Aug. 21 at 6:30: Woe to those who try to classify Amina Claudine Myers. Blurring the lines between the blues, gospel, pop, and new jazz, this keyboardist and singer has been a godsend to such adventurous leaders as Lester Bowie, Arthur Blythe, and Charlie Haden. Myers is a musical genre unto herself. (North Plaza.) . . . ¶ Aug. 22-23: "The Roots of American Music." (North Plaza, starting at 2; Damrosch Park, starting at 7 on the 22nd and at 6 on the 23rd.) . . . ¶ Aug. 26 at 6:30: "A Tribute to Loonis McGlohon." Among the vocalists and instrumentalists fêting the songwriter's songwriter McGlohon are Marlene Verplanck, Barbara Lea, pianist Marian McPartland, guitarist Gene Bertoncini, and trumpeter Joe Wilder. (North Plaza.) . . . ¶ Aug. 27 at 6:30: New-music composer "Blue" Gene Tyranny. (North Plaza.) . . . ¶ Aug. 28 at 8: Three reasons to love Jimmy Bosch: he's a monster trombonist, he leads a kicking Latin band, and he's still a loyal employee of a local bagel store. With the Cuban ensemble Son 14. (Damrosch Park.) . . . ¶ Aug. 29: The durable compositions left to us by Charles Mingus also have flexible limbs. While Akua Dixon's Quartette Indigo (at 6, North Plaza) favors elegant reductions, the well-stocked Mingus Big Band (at 8, Damrosch Park) approaches Mingus's work with heft and power. . . . ¶ Aug. 30 at 8: "Brazilfest '98: Jobim and Beyond," featuring Quintero D'elas, Lela Pinheiro, Bebel Gilberto, and Patricia Marx. (Damrosch Park.)

Beastie Boys—Local boys make good, again. After a long absence, during which performers like Celine Dion and Shania Twain (see below) seemed to change the ground rules of pop success, the Beasties surprised the world (and, perhaps, themselves) when "Hello Nasty," their latest opus, hit the charts at No. 1. It wasn't a miracle, given rap's control of the pop charts, but the Beasties aren't really a rap act: they're more like pro-Buddhist performance artists, with obnoxious adenoids. On hand to keep it real is a collection of excellent opening acts, including A Tribe Called Quest and Money Mark. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Aug. 21 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Continental Airlines Arena, the Meadowlands. 212-307-7171. Aug. 22 at 7:30. . . . ¶ With KRS-One and Money Mark; Nassau Coliseum. 516-794-9300. Aug. 24 at 7:30.)

KC & the Sunshine Band, Gloria Gaynor, Sister Sledge, and the Trammps—Billed as a "70's Flashback," this Who's Who of dance-fever legends should make your body spin like a well-polished disco ball. (Jones Beach Theatre. 516-221-1000. Aug. 21 at 8.)

Shania Twain—This Canadian-born resident of upstate New York writes the majority of her material with the man who made Def Leppard famous (her husband, producer Robert Lange), but, after having sold some fourteen million records, Twain is still considered a country artist. With her slick, radio-friendly production and her sex-kitten image, she's really more like Pat Benatar than Patsy Cline. (Jones Beach Theatre. Aug. 22 at 8.)

Hanson—Unfettered by acne, cracking voices, or the inevitable urge to go solo, the brothers Hanson soldier on. That the boys no longer have a record in the top 100 might suggest that the novelty has run its course, but well-informed adults beg to differ: these kids can play. Live, they have a professional polish that suggests a bright future. (Continental Airlines Arena, the Meadowlands. Aug. 24 at 7:30.)

Tsunami Music Festival—Clem Snide, Elysian Fields, and Skeleton Key, three of New York's finest homegrown acts. (Central Park Band Shell, mid-Park at 72nd St. 561-0810. Aug. 25 starting at 5:30.)

Wayne Newton—Miss hearing the King of Vegas sing "Danke Schoen" at your peril. (Westbury Music Fair. 516-334-0800. Aug. 26 at 8.)

Gipsy Kings—The talented seven-man family band of French gypsies. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. Aug. 27-28 at 8.)

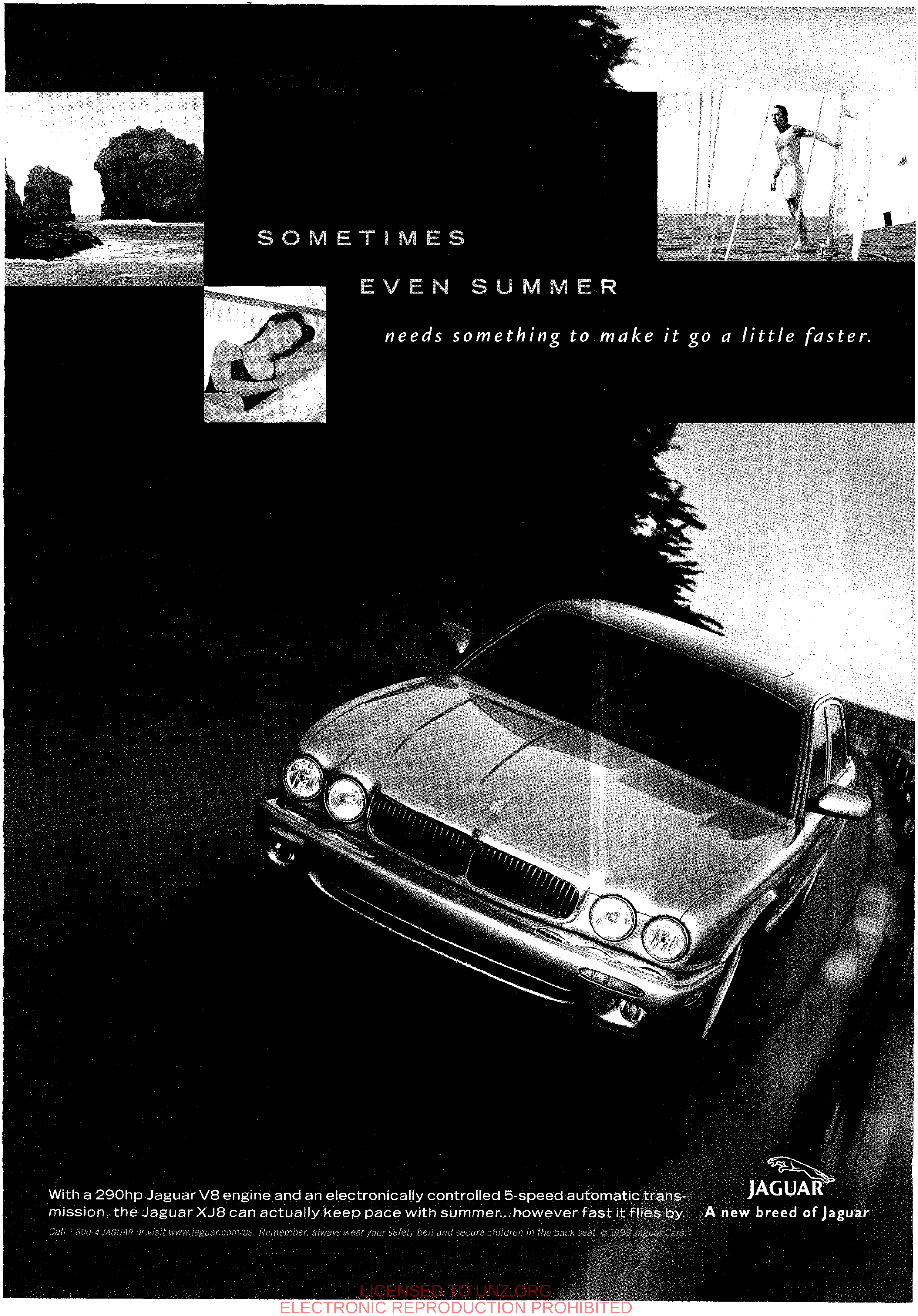
Backstreet Boys—The teenybopper singing group that makes thinking people everywhere wax nostalgic for New Kids on the Block. (Nassau Coliseum. Aug. 27 and Sept. 2 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Continental Airlines Arena, the Meadowlands. Aug. 29 at 7:30.)

Charlie Parker Jazz Festival—It makes sense that an avant-leaning sax ensemble (the Julius Hemphill Sextet, led by Marty Ehrlich), a full-throated vocalist (Etta Jones), a rhythmically charged Latin band (led by the legendary conga player Ray Barretto), and a genuine bebop alto saxophonist (Lou Donaldson) should headline this year's Charlie Parker Festival. Parker himself was an avant-leaning saxman, he recorded with full-throated vocalists and Latin bands, and, when it came to bebop alto saxophone, he wrote the book. (Tompkins Square Park. Aug. 30 at 3.)

The Temptations, the Four Tops, the Supremes, and Little Anthony and the Imperials—An evening of classic R. & B. by the sea. (Jones Beach Theatre. Aug. 30 at 7:30.)

Earth, Wind & Fire / The Isley Brothers—The premier rhythm-pop band of the seventies conducts a seminar in the semantics of

JOSEF ASTOR



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JAGUAR

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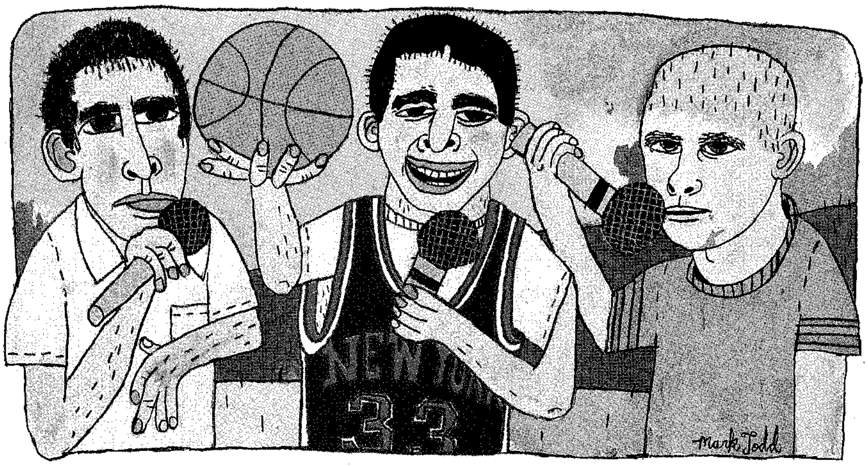
funk./The Isleys may never regain the inspiration of early-seventies classics like "Work to Do" and "That Lady," but live, they deliver the hits as if they wrote them yesterday. With the O'Jays. (Radio City Music Hall. Aug. 30-31 at 8.)

Celine Dion—Can eighteen million people be wrong? Thanks to a fortuitous ride on the "Titanic" juggernaut and to a voice capable of sending icebergs fleeing in terror, this iron-lunged, chest-pounding, French-Canadian microphone hog is now the most successful recording artist of the past two years. And her reign just looks to go on and on. (Continental Airlines Arena, the Meadowlands. Aug. 30 at 8. . . . ¶ Nassau Coliseum. Aug. 31 at 8.)

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Birdland, 315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—Aug. 19-20: If obscurity has any advantage at all, it may be the purity of style that isolation breeds. Trumpeter and flugelhornist **DANNY MOORE** isn't the great lost jazzman of the age, just a polished, vital player whose biting runs and vocal phrases roll forth untouched by affectations or fashionable tics. Moore makes real the evolution from Clifford Brown's fifties classicism to Freddie Hubbard's sixties modernism. Aug. 21-22: Arranger **DON SEBESKY'S** pretentious work for CTI Records in the seventies is still a black mark on his résumé, but he began wiping the slate clean last year with his well-crafted tribute to pianist Bill Evans. Hearing Evans's tunes reorchestrated for a large ensemble will be a treat; too bad the man who inspired it all isn't around to sit in. Aug. 26-29: A young guitarist with chops to spare, **MARK WHITFIELD** has the funky fluidity of a pre-pop George Benson, bolstered by a deep vein of gospel and blues. Dining.



Fast-breaking with the Beastie Boys, at three different venues (see Concerts).

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Aug. 23: The **PHIL WOODS** big band and the **JACKY TERRASSON** trio. Forty-five years down the line, Woods still breathes bop. The alto saxophonist, who speaks fluent Parker but has his own relaxed and ripely romantic take on the music, is playing better than ever./Pianist Terrasson plays the way he wants to play: tempos, dynamics, and arrangements are just so much wax to be bent, shaped, and messed with. A Terrasson set is flexible—it all depends on his mood. The spontaneity may be admirable and exciting, but why does it all sound so mannered? Aug. 25-30: **CHUCK MANGIONE** and his "Feels So Good" band. Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—Pianist **PETER MINTUN** is in the midst of a two-month stay at Bemelmans Bar.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—You can almost hear the grass on the savanna rustle as South African expatriate **ABDULLAH IBRAHIM** (through Aug. 23) stirs up a lolling piano vamp; his trio rides his undulating rhythms expertly. Groove reigns rather than technique—a welcome turn of events in jazz. Aug. 25-30: The **CHICO HAMILTON** quintet. Mondays belong to guitarist **LES PAUL.**

Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—Through Aug. 22: Pianists don't come any more swinging than **RAY BRYANT.** Imagine Oscar Peterson's technique and Erroll Garner's buoyancy mated with an authentic feel for the blues. Bryant's an original and a pleasure to hear. With bassist **RAY DRUMMOND** and drummer **WINARD HARPER.**

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Through Aug. 23: It's been a while since a new mainstream violinist made a dent on the scene, but **REGINA CARTER** is making up for lost time. She's done yeoman's work with Wynton Marsalis, Kenny Barron, and Cassandra Wilson, and her own band will feature such topflight players as drummer **LEWIS NASH,** bassist **PETER WASHINGTON,** pianist **MULGREW MILLER,** and guitarist **RODNEY JONES.** Aug. 25-30: In the early seventies, **STANLEY COWELL'S** career seemed like a sure bet; that it never built up a sufficient head of steam hasn't affected his prodigious talents as a pianist and composer. He's still one of the more thoughtful improvisers around, only now he's no longer a young lion but an exemplar of the middle-aged "lost generation" of players. And he wears experience well. Dining.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The celebrated pianist **GERI ALLEN** (in through Aug. 23) may be the most accomplished player of her generation—it's not every keyboardist who gets to be the very first pianist in Ornette Coleman's band—but she's all too willing to share the spotlight. Her trio will be embellished here by a percussionist and—count 'em—two trombonists. Aug. 25-30: The glories of **FRED HERSCH'S** pianistic talents are no longer any kind of insider secret, but the gripping interplay that he's developed with his longtime trio mates, bassist **DREW GRESS** and drummer **TOM RAINEY,** is worthy of continued attention. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—Through Aug. 22: Pianist **KENNY KIRKLAND,** bassist **CHARNETT MOFFET,** and drummer **JEFF (TAIN) WATTS.** Aug. 25-29: Amiable, dependable, sleek: pianist **JOHN BUNCH,** guitarist **BUCKY PIZZARELLI,** and bassist **JAY LEONHART** aren't in the business of ruffling feathers. What they do best is weave a broadloom of gently intoxicating swing.

ROCK, ETC.

Acme Underground, 9 Great Jones St. (677-6963)—Aug. 19 and Aug 26: John Flansburgh's trio **MONO PUFF.**

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Aug. 22: **NILS LOFGREN,** the solo artist and former Springsteen guitarist, in an acoustic show. Aug. 27: Rock vagabonds (and Traffic alumni) **DAVE MASON** and **JIM CAPALDI.**

Bowery Ballroom, 6 Delancey St. (533-2111)—Aug. 19: Groovy trip-hop with **HOOVERPHONIC.** Aug. 21: Former London Suede guitarist **BERNARD BUTLER.** Aug. 25: Japanese speed-pop with **SHONEN KNIFE.**

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—Aug. 19 and Aug. 26: Filmmaker **MELVIN VAN PEEBLES,** in a song-and-story variety show. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—Aug. 26: **CRACKER** wallows in white-trash woe and post-slacker doldrums.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken (201-798-4064)—Aug. 27: **JULIANA HATFIELD** doesn't particularly enjoy being a girl, but some people relish her tales of post-feminist self-loathing and post-adolescent ennui. Perhaps it's her coy but surprisingly supple voice that captures them.

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Aug. 25-26: Traffic co-founders **DAVE MASON** and **JIM CAPALDI** (see the Bottom Line). Aug. 29: The **SILOS.**

S.O.B.'s, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—Aug. 24: Salsa king **TITO PUENTE.** Aug. 28: The Trinidadian singer **DAVID RUDDER** and his calypso-and-soca backup band **CHARLIE'S ROOTS.** Dining.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—The **CONNELLS** (Aug. 27) play the kind of edgy, melodic, lyrically oblique songs that, about ten years ago, got them labelled "the next R.E.M." Aug. 28: Blues legend **TAJ MAHAL** and **COREY HARRIS,** a young blues prodigy whose steel-guitar work is infused with the spirit of the Delta.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—"Edward Burne-Jones: Victorian Artist-Dreamer," a splendid survey devoted to this preëminent Pre-Raphaelite. The exhibition includes paintings, works on paper, books, stained glass, and tapestries that Burne-Jones executed in collaboration with his friend William Morris. The show reanimates this long-unfashionable painter. Through Sept. 6. . . . ¶ "Ellsworth Kelly on the Roof." Through late fall. . . . ¶ The French designer Jean Dunand (1877-1942) richly deserves the moniker the Met has bestowed on him in this mini-retrospective: "Master of Art Deco." Through Oct. 25. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—For seemingly arbitrary reasons, Pierre Bonnard's genius has been reflexively measured against Picasso's, and found wanting. Proust, however, is closer to home, and this exquisite retrospective—the first here in thirty-four years—shows why: both the painter and the novelist turned the surface shimmer of bourgeois contentment into mysterious evocations of memory. Through Oct. 13. (See also Galleries—Uptown.) . . . ¶ "Love Forever: Yayoi Kusama, 1958-68." (See also Galleries—Downtown.) Through Sept. 22. . . . ¶ "Tony Smith: Architect, Painter, Sculptor." Through Sept. 22. . . . ¶ The impressive retrospective of Alexander Rodchenko (1891-1956) is valuable as much for its insights into the rise and decline of the Russian Revolution as for its art-historical contribution. A leader of the avant-garde in the twenties, Rodchenko was a founder of Constructivism, an early—and very witty—practitioner of photocollage, and a brilliant graphic designer. Through Oct. 6. . . . ¶ "David Goldblatt: Photographs from South Africa" is a strangely understated series of black-and-white photographs taken in South Africa at the end of the apartheid era. A few of the images here, such as those documenting the

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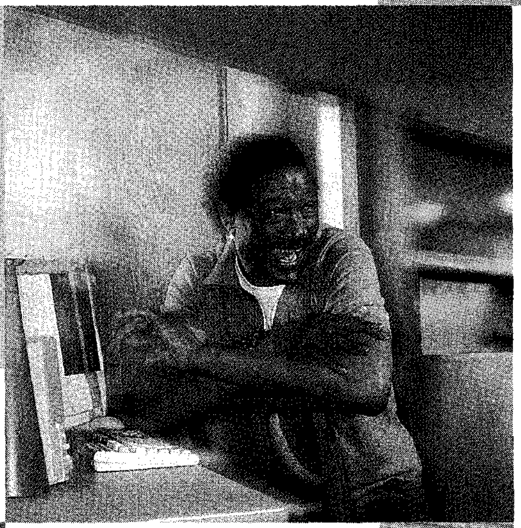

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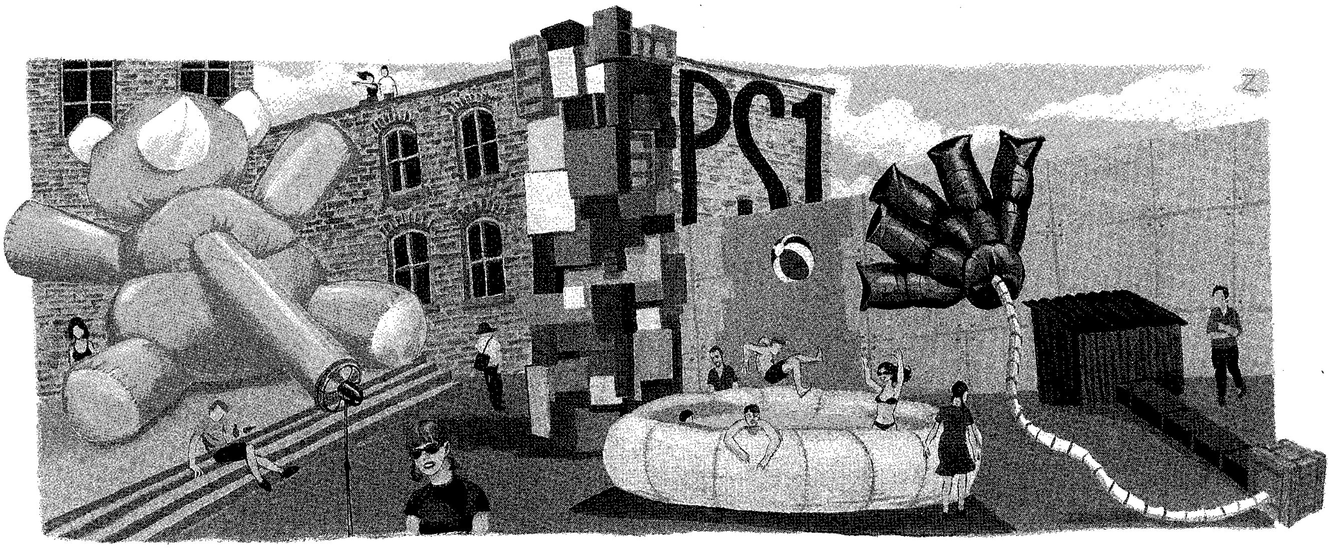


Amusement art: the outdoor installation "Percutaneous Delights," at P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center.

squalid living conditions of black South Africans, are powerfully self-explanatory, but most of them occupy a curious middle ground between reportage and photography for art's sake. Through Oct. 6. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 6; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—"The Art of the Motorcycle," a dazzling collection of a hundred and eleven bikes, from the late nineteenth century to the present. The installation, designed by Frank Gehry, is itself a work of art: the architect has faced the ramps of the rotunda with stainless steel, giving a hallucinatory shimmer to Frank Lloyd Wright's masterpiece. The show might be summarized in one word: bitchin'. Through Sept. 20. . . . ¶ "Vilhelm Hammershøi (1864-1916): Danish Painter of Solitude and Light." Through Sept. 7. . . . ¶ "Peggy Guggenheim: A Centennial Celebration." Through Sept. 2. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway, at Prince St. (423-3500)—"The Hugo Boss Prize, 1998." The lineup of finalists for the fifty-thousand-dollar award is multinational and multicultural: Douglas Gordon (the winner) from Scotland, Lorna Simpson from the United States, William Kentridge from South Africa, Lee Bul from South Korea, Pipilotti Rist from Switzerland, and Huang Yong Ping from China. Most of the work on view, however, is familiar enough to gallerygoers, and it seems considerably less transgressive than one might have imagined. The show does confirm certain trends in recent art: a vaguely politicized undercurrent and the continuing reliance on installation, film, and video. Through Sept. 20. . . . ¶ Four video installations ("Bronx," "Roma," "Liquid Crystals," and "Baroque Cathodic Movements") by the Venetian artist Fabrizio Plessi. Through Sept. 13. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—A mid-career retrospective of Charles Ray, one of the most discreet yet powerful artists to emerge from the raucous L.A. art scene. Through Aug. 30. . . . ¶ "Unknown Terrain: The Landscapes of Andrew Wyeth." Through Aug. 30. . . . ¶ "The Studio Within" is a Disneyesque mockup of Richard Pousette-Dart's last atelier (in a carriage house in Suffern, New York), which, for hokey verisimilitude, lacks only an animated likeness of the late Abstract Expressionist flinging some paint around. Still, it's worth a look, if only for the diary pages, the odd white sculptures in the eaves, and several fine paintings, like the bubblegum impasto of "Amalfa" (1962). Through Sept. 13. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art at Philip Morris, Park Ave. at 42nd St. (878-2550)—"Hope Sandrow: Water Life," a spare and restful installation in the midtown hubbub. Sandrow has neatly packed thousands of spiral seashells in cardboard boxes, which are themselves arranged on the gallery floors according to the idealized proportions set forth by the Greek sculptor Phidias. The walls are hung with large photographs of figures floating underwater, and a recording of running water plays continuously. Through Oct. 9. (Open Mondays through Fridays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 7:30.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St. (769-5100)—The recently opened Hall of Biodiversity, a permanent exhibit, attempts to make vivid the dangers posed to life on Earth by the exploding human population and the consequent degradation of the global environment. The centerpiece is a diorama of the Central African rain forest, enclosed in a glass box of spectacular dimensions. The museum has raided the attic to create a handsomely displayed encyclopedia of flora and fauna called "Spectrum of Life," which covers the hall's western wall and extends to an overhead canopy. Computers loaded with videos enable visitors to learn about everything from the results of American ichthyological research in Gabon to the tragedy of the ongoing forest fires in Indonesia. There's almost too much multimedia interactivity going on, though: the blare of video monitors and a film presentation make the atmosphere somewhat hectic. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Brooklyn Museum of Art, Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—"Masters of Color and Light: Homer, Sargent, and the American Watercolor Movement" showcases more than a hundred and fifty works from the museum's extensive collection. Through Aug. 23. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays, 11 to 9; and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. (288-0700)—The Winterstein Collection, a private holding of drawings and watercolors which spans the years 1750 to 1850 (or, the Age of Goethe), is an assortment of landscapes, allegorical scenes, and portraits, many of them studies for larger works, and all palpably overshadowed by the last great era of German draftsmanship some three centuries before (the Age of Albrecht Dürer). Most compelling here are the oddballs, among them a light-flooded convent by Caspar David Friedrich (ca. 1835) and a winsome 1815 self-portrait by the young Johann von Leonhardsoff, entitled "Pretty Miserable" (he was suffering from tuberculosis at the time). Through Aug. 30. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Museo del Barrio, Fifth Ave. at 104th St. (831-7272)—"Beatriz González: What an Honor to Be with You at This Historical Moment—Works, 1965-97." To the basic Pop strategy of ad-copy irony, this Colombian artist adds a political conscience. Her stylistic juxtapositions can be wry (European masterpieces repainted on furniture), direct ("Guernica" recast as a mural for a socialist factory), and even, as in her most recent work, personal: the one self-portrait here seems to have grown out of a series of Gauguin appropriations in which the exotic bare-breasted island women cover their faces in a moment of private grief. Through Oct. 25. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5.)

P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, 22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave., Long Island City (718-784-2084)—For "Percutaneous Delights," the artists of the Austrian group Gelatin have installed a variety of auspicious frivolities—a pool, a walk-in refrigerator, a sunbathing platform, a big inflatable Teddy bear—throughout the museum's outdoor galleries (the former P.S. 1 parking lot). Through Aug. 30. . . . ¶ "Gordon Matta-Clark: Drawings Retrospective and Re-creation of Historic Projects." Through Aug. 30. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

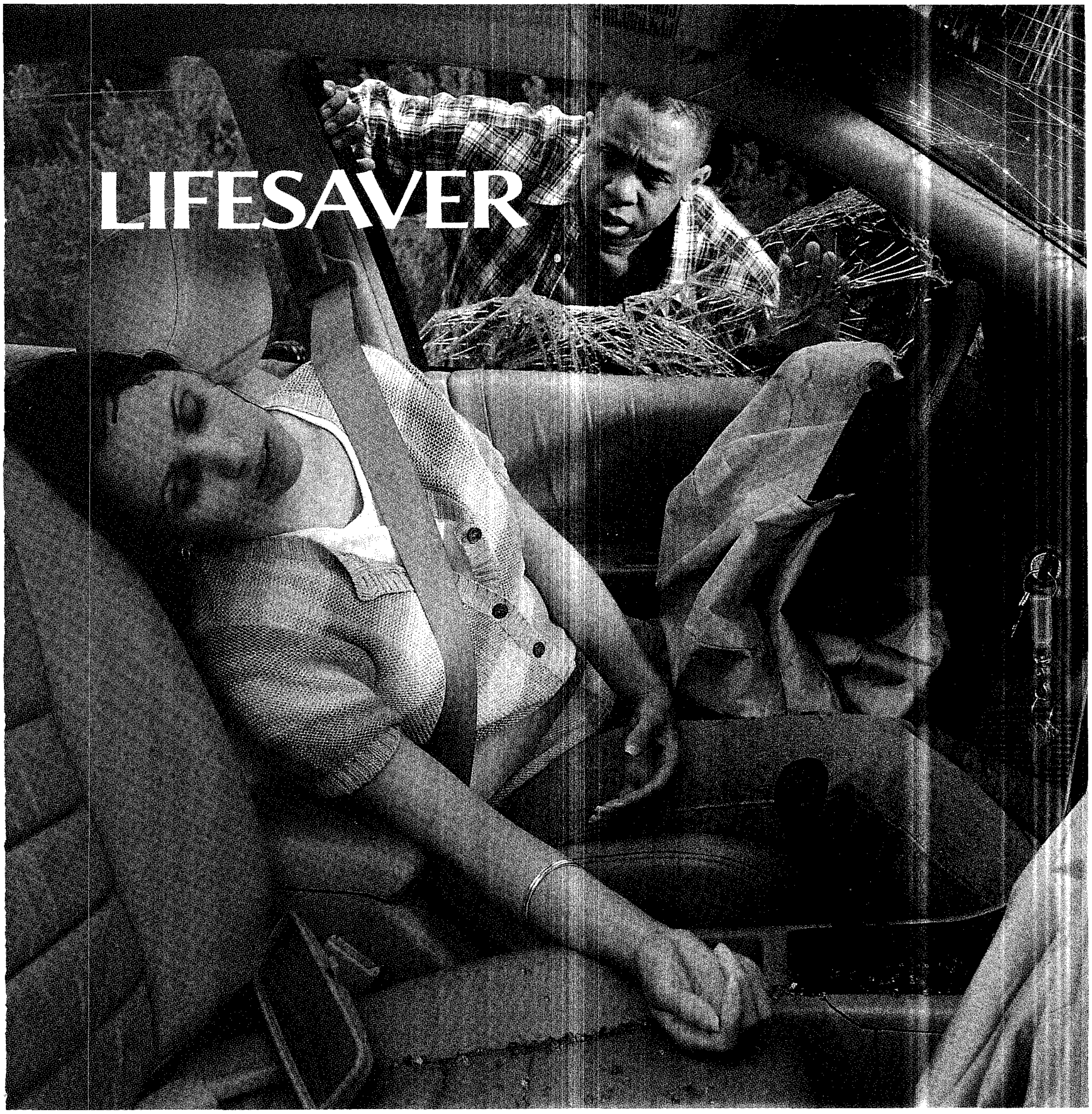
(Summer hours: unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Mondays through Fridays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Peter Begley—Archetypal renderings of spare vistas (horizons with trees), done with a cave-painterly clarity. Through Aug. 28. (Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. 879-6606.)

Pierre Bonnard (1867-1947)—Most of the drawings in this exhibition are rough, throwaway sketches, except for a series of studies for a children's book, which exert an irresistible charm, and a suite of music-hall caricatures, from 1893, that possess all the vibrant energy of Toulouse-Lautrec's work from the same era and milieu. An exquisite still-life of a vase of flowers, painted in 1930, reminds us why this artist is worth cherishing: the vivid splash of one crimson bloom anchors a symphony of whites, magically evoking a simultaneous mood of sadness and tranquillity. Through Oct. 10. (Wildenstein, 19 E. 64th St. 879-0500.)

Shirley Goldfarb (1925-80)—An American painter who lived in Paris, Goldfarb was almost unknown in her native country during her lifetime; this exhibition shows what we

ZOHAR LAZAR



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missed out on. Influenced by both the color-field school and French conceptual painters such as Yves Klein, she worked with a palette knife to apply pure color in ways that invite intellectual consideration even as they beguile the eye. A huge blue canvas, from 1970, has the retinal impact of a work by Klein, and "Lime & Purple" has many more colors than that, smeared in thumb-size swatches, like cross-sections of Venetian-glass paperweights. Through Sept. 4. (Zabriskie, 41 E. 57th St. 752-1223.)

"Figure Drawings"—By Georg Baselitz, Jim Dine, Eric Fischl, Alice Neel, Ellen Phelan, and Wayne Thiebaud, among others. Through Sept. 11. (Danese, 41 E. 57th St. 223-2227.)

"A Flower Is to the Summer Sweet"—A bouquet of still-lifes and other works with floral adornments, by Martin Johnson Heade, Frederick Carl Frieseke, Ethel Mars, Agnes Weinreich, Edna Boies Hopkins, and the Tucker porcelain factories. Through Sept. 25. (Hirschl & Adler, 21 E. 70th St. 535-8810.)

"Histories (Re)membered"—The mountain comes to Manhattan: selections from the permanent collection of the Bronx Museum of the Arts, including work by Carrie Mae Weems, Lorna Simpson, Kara Walker, Glenn Ligon, and Luis Jiménez, make the midtown commute. Through Sept. 11. (PaineWebber Building, Sixth Ave. at 52nd St. 713-2885.)

"On Paper"—Works in many mediums by twenty-two artists from the past fifty years. There are striking contrasts: a totemic abstraction by Robert Motherwell, executed in a few deft strokes, and a laborious cartoon of a circus scene by Victor Vasarely before he Op'ed out. Ellen Levy's "Paper Clips and Terriers" is a complex composition in charcoal and ink spray which creates a pattern of abstract monumentality reminiscent of a Piranesi prison interior. Helen Frankenthaler's abstract monotype, of what look like lumpy female bathers, has an uncharacteristically goofy charm. Carlo Maria Mariani's large drawing of a classical female head, rendered in pencil and pastel with an almost Ingres-esque precision, sprouting a pair of coral antlers in watercolor, mocks the conventions of traditionally finished drawing. Through Aug. 28. (Associated American Artists, 20 W. 57th St. 399-5510.)

Short List—**kara walker,** City College, Convent Ave. at 138th St. 650-8951. Open Mondays through Thursdays, 11 to 4; through Sept. 18. . . . **steve wheeler,** York, 21 E. 65th St. 772-9155. Through Aug. 28.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

Romio Shrestha—Paintings that interpret Indian Ayurvedic medical tenets in images both fearsome and fanciful, by a Nepalese artist expert in traditional techniques of applying gold and lapis lazuli. Through Aug. 31. (Tibet House, 22 W. 15th St. 807-0563.)

"From Here to Eternity"—A survey of painting includes examples of conceptual abstraction (by Jonathan Lasker and Byron Kim), 3-D (by Jessica Stockholder and James Hyde), neo-Pop (by Thomas Nozkowski and Amy Sillman), and psychological portraiture (by Sean Mellyn, John Currin, and Lisa Yuskavage). Through Aug. 14. (Protetch, 511 W. 22nd St. 633-6999.)

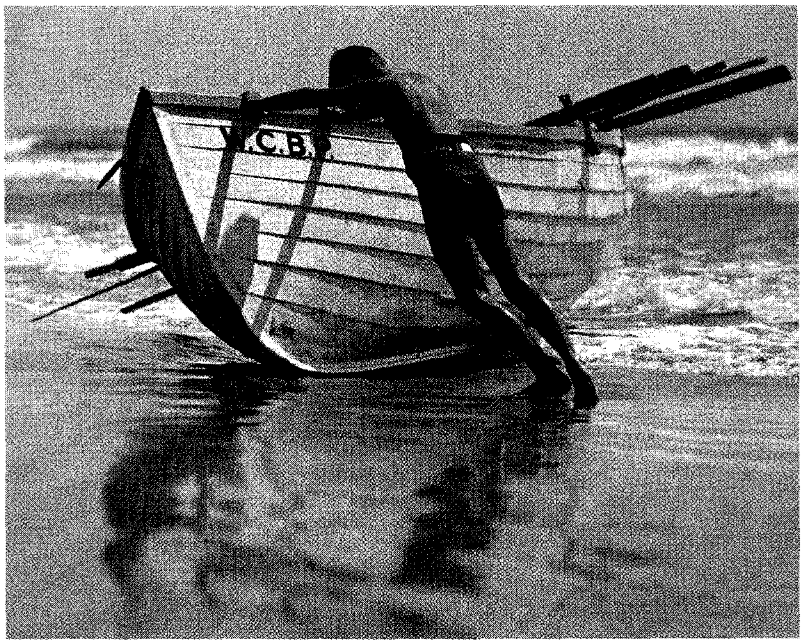
"Small Paintings"—Niche work, if you can get it, by Ingo Meller, Richmond Burton, Joan Mitchell, Juan Uslé, and others. Through Aug. 28. (Cheim & Read, 521 W. 23rd St. 242-7727.)

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

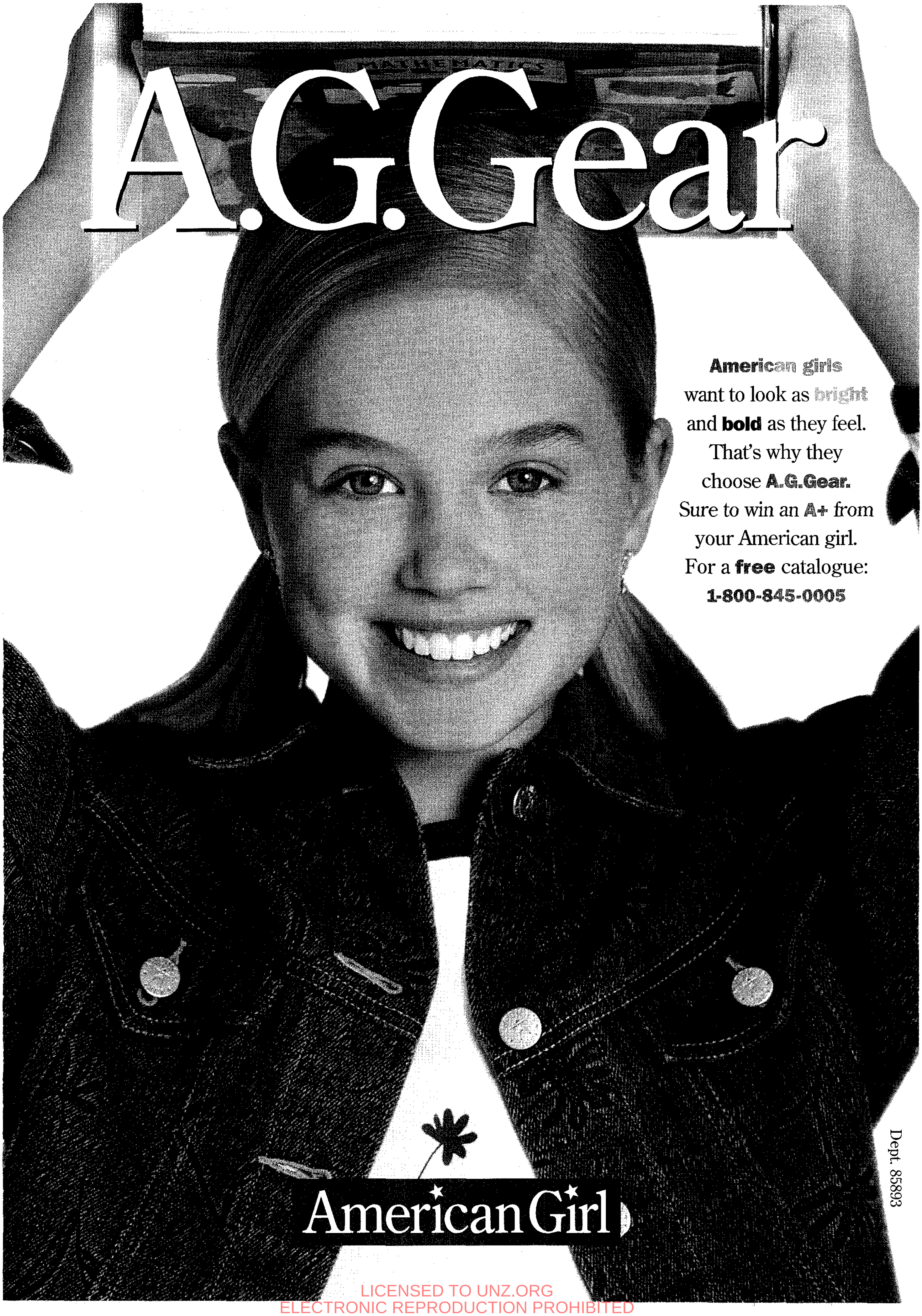
Paul Dickerson (1961-97)—An exhibition of sculptures and drawings, ranging from the lyrical to the seriously subversive, by a talented American artist who committed suicide last year. Many of the sculptures are neo-Dada, such as a shrink-wrapped automobile fuel tank, a plastic garbage pail filled with crumpled aluminum, and a mass of rubber lobsters mounted atop a photographer's tripod. One gorgeous painting on plywood presents an expanse of sea-green pigment, crystallized by salt into delicate, feathery patterns. A wall of neatly executed, cartoonish drawings suggests that the artist possessed not only wit and a fine eye but also a profoundly idealistic streak, which ultimately failed him. Through Sept. 3. (American Fine Arts, 22 Wooster St. 941-0401.)

Yayoi Kusama—An exhibition of early works on paper by this protean, delicately gifted Japanese artist strengthens her steadily rising reputation. Dating to the early fifties, before Kusama came to New York, these small-format drawings range impressively from austere fields of black ink dots to brilliantly colored gouaches that hover between abstraction and representation. Through Sept. 29. (Blum, 99 Wooster St. 343-0441.)

Masamichi Tohyama—The ancient Japanese art of ceramics, updated by an artist who paints acrylic enamel directly onto standard square bathroom tiles, which are then fired and assembled in modular abstractions. Some of the tiles are pure, brilliant color (glossy red, Max Factor beige);



Edward Quigley's "Boy with W.C.B.P. Boat on Beach," in "Ship/Shape" (DeLellis).



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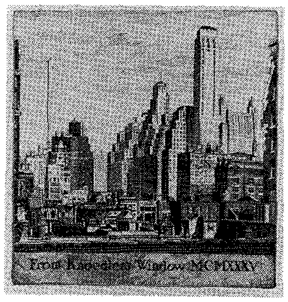

John Taylor Arms, etching, 1935.

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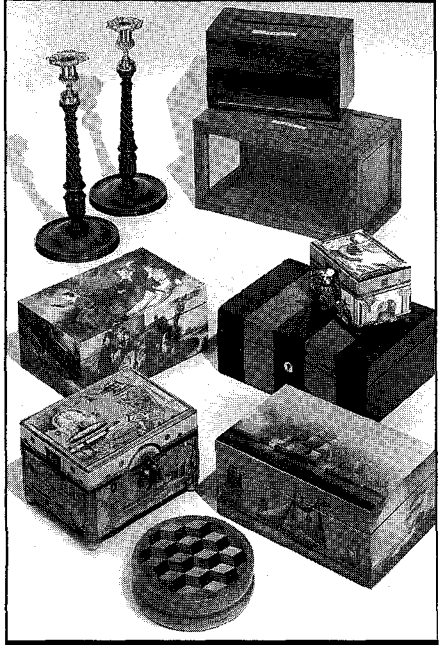

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others are scribbled over in Twomblyesque non-statements; still others are spray-painted to create mysterious mists. "A Story" is a ceramic work that alternates finger-painted grids with tiles that verge on figuration and then cross the line, elegantly, showing a beautiful calligraphic tree. Through Sept. 10. (Wickiser, 568 Broadway. 941-1817.)

"HEADSTAND"—The most striking works in this group show of emerging artists from America and Britain are Jane Benson's landscapes—real grass undulating in hills and dales that look like a leprechaun's haunt—which fill the gallery with the smell of earth. Kristin Mojsiewicz was legally adopted for a month by two acquaintances, a couple her own age; to illustrate this event, the artist exhibits the legal document and a smiling portrait of her and her "parents." Documentation also figures heavily in the work of Henry Steingieser, who mounted a video camera on a helmet and crawled through a sewer in L.A. The videotape and helmet are on display, along with an array of legal documents arising from his arrest, by alert federal agents, as he emerged unawares out of a manhole on the first anniversary of the Oklahoma City bombing. Through Aug. 29. (Wimmer, 560 Broadway. 274-0274.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

"SHIP/SHAPE"—Nautical imagery by such European and American photographers as Doris Ulmann, Edward Steichen, Harold Costain, and Edward Quigley. Through Aug. 29. (DeLellis, 47 E. 68th St. 327-1482. Closed Tuesdays.)

"SUMMER SALON V (PICTURES WE LIKE)"—Featuring photographs by Sylvia Plachy, Adam Baer, William Gottlieb, and Lissie Habie. Through Aug. 28. (Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. 517-3766.)

"SUR LA TÊTE"—Pictures that take the head as a focal point, by Édouard Boubat, Mario Cravo Neto, Michael von Graffenreid, and Graciela Iturbide. Through Aug. 28. (Witkin, 415 West Broadway. 925-5510.)

"WALKER EVANS: THE MOMA MURALS"/"COUNTER CULTURE: THE DINER IN AMERICA"—Six mural-size prints made by the photographer for his 1971 museum retrospective. / Works by, among others, Garry Winogrand, William Klein, Weegee, and Ray K. Metzker. Both shows through Aug. 21. (Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. 226-1220.)

"WOMEN TRAVELLERS"—Works by nine adventurers, including Leah Demchick, Marina Karella, Marcia Lippman, and Mai Duong. Through Sept. 22. (Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway. 966-6223.)

GROUP SHOW—Serial work by John Coplans, Wolfgang Tillmans, Vibeke Tandberg, and Dexter Buell. Through Aug. 21. (Rosen, 525 W. 24th St. 627-6000.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY—"Comparative Concepts: Photographs by August Sander, Karl Blossfeldt, Albert Renger-Patzsch, and Bernd and Hilla Becher." Through Sept. 13. (1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. 860-1777. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY MIDTOWN—"Mathew Brady's Portraits: Images As History, Photography As Art." Through Sept. 6. . . . ¶ "A Bronx Family Album: The Impact of AIDS, by Steve Hart." Through Sept. 6. (Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. 860-1777. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

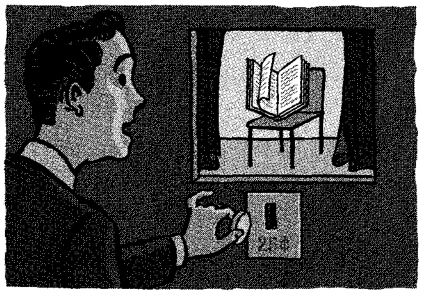
SHORT LIST—**NINA KORHONEN**, SABA, 116 E. 16th St. 477-7722. Through Aug. 31. . . . **JOCK STURGES**, Richardson, 560 Broadway. 343-1255. Through Sept. 4. . . . **LINDA TROELLER**, Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. 505-5555. Through Sept. 12.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art.)

BOOK CURRENTS

Up Close and Personal

At one time, the label "unauthorized biography" guaranteed a juicy life story from a frank and fearless chronicler. These days, the term seems to promise little more than titillation at a cheap cover price. And yet unauthorized biographies do offer, in their often unreliable way, a valuable gauge of contemporary obsessions about the lives of the justly and not so justly celebrated.



CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

The indisputable master of the genre is Kitty Kelley, whose determination to get the goods on her subjects left Nancy Reagan, Frank Sinatra, Jacqueline Onassis and the Royal Family for dead. Now the tables have been turned on Kelley, who is the subject of **POISON PEN** (recently reissued in paperback by Barricade), by George Carpozi, Jr. This Kelley clone trashes both his paragon's life and her books, on the ground that what she's really up to is projecting her own traumas onto the lives of her hapless targets.

It's easy to dismiss the Kelley brand of biography as cheesy, but nowadays even the most serious biographies find it necessary to dish a little dirt. Hugo Mager, in **ELIZABETH, GRAND DUCHESS OF RUSSIA** (Carroll & Graf), informs us that the beautiful Hessian's marriage was empty and that her husband, the Grand Duke Serge, was a homosexual. Meanwhile, Ellis Amburn, in his new biography **SUBTERRANEAN KEROUAC** (St. Martin's), sets himself the daunting task of coming up with embarrassing things about a writer whose career was devoted heavily to self-revelation.

Such invasions of privacy make for awkwardness when the victims are still alive. D. M. Thomas's **ALEXANDER SOLZHENITSYN** (St. Martin's) mixes highbrow commentary with revelations about the dissident's philandering that have reportedly made him thoroughly displeased. And Germaine Greer has called Christine Wallace, the author of the unauthorized biography **UNTAMED SHREW** (coming from Faber and Faber next year), a "dung beetle" and a "flesh-eating bacterium" just for having the cheek to take on the project. Surely Johnson never said that about Boswell.

Books.

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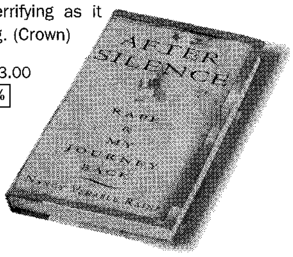
RAPE AND MY JOURNEY BACK

by Nancy Venable Raine

From a writer whose essays and poems have appeared in the *New York Times Magazine* and *Southern Poetry Review* comes a harrowing and honest account of rape and recovery. Seven years after the most horrifying hours of her life, Nancy Venable Raine opens the door to public discourse on rape: *After Silence* is a book that is as terrifying as it is illuminating. (Crown)

Pub. Price: $23.00
Discount 30%
B&N Price $16.10


AFTER SILENCE
RAPE & MY JOURNEY BACK
NANCY VENABLE RAINE

HAVANA DREAMS

A STORY OF CUBA

by Wendy Gimbel

Fidel Castro: soldier, revolutionary, romantic lead. *Havana Dreams* is the story of four generations of Cuban women. The book is centered on Naty, a young lady who fell under Fidel's spell and bore him a child, but whose love went unrequited. Wendy Gimbel eloquently melds romance and politics in a factual and personal history of Cuba. (Knopf)

Pub. Price: $24.00
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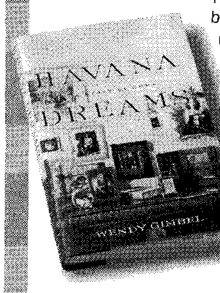
HAVANA DREAMS
WENDY GIMBEL

BELIEFS & BLASPHEMIES

A COLLECTION OF POEMS

by Virginia Hamilton Adair

The author of *Ants on the Melon* returns with a collection of poetry that lightly, yet deeply, explores religion. Virginia Hamilton Adair uses the knowledge of her eight decades of living to examine faith and our relationship to it. *Beliefs and Blasphemies* tackles an ethereal subject with an earthy touch. (Random House)

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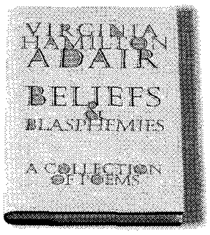
VIRGINIA HAMILTON ADAIR
BELIEFS & BLASPHEMIES
A COLLECTION OF POEMS

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HOW STEVE CASE BEAT BILL GATES, NAILED THE NETHEADS, AND MADE MILLIONS IN THE WAR FOR THE WEB

by Kara Swisher

Bill Gates couldn't buy them. CompuServe couldn't beat them. The censors couldn't shut them down. AOL beat all the odds to become the Internet service provider, with more than eleven million subscribers. *Wall Street Journal* reporter Kara Swisher tells the story of an American upstart in a book laden with boardroom battles, behind-the-scenes scheming, and, in the end, success on every level. (Times Books)

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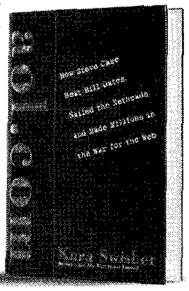
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How Steve Case Beat Bill Gates, Nailed the Netheads, and Made Millions in the War for the Web
Kara Swisher

THE MARS MYSTERY

THE SECRET CONNECTION BETWEEN EARTH AND THE RED PLANET

by Graham Hancock

Mars is more than a neighbor. In *The Mars Mystery*, Graham Hancock reveals Mars to be a mirror of Earth through which we can solve some of our own planet's mysteries, such as the beginnings of Egyptian civilization. The author of the bestselling *Fingerprints of the Gods* uses all the evidence available to present a compelling theory on our relationship to the Red Planet. (Crown)

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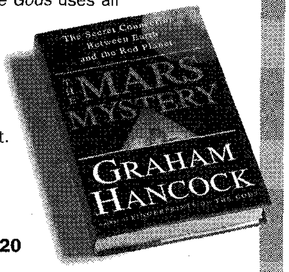
The Secret Connection Between Earth and the Red Planet
THE MARS MYSTERY
GRAHAM HANCOCK

INSIDE THE SKY

A MEDITATION ON FLIGHT

by William Langewiesche

William Langewiesche has his head in the clouds, and that's a good thing. *Inside the Sky* is a testament to flight and flying that opens earth-bound eyes to the promises of greener pastures at thirty thousand feet. The *Atlantic Monthly* correspondent and pilot uses his love of flying to expand on such themes as physics, philosophy, and teamwork. (Pantheon)

Pub. Price: $24.00
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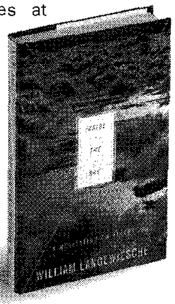
B&N Price $16.80


INSIDE THE SKY
WILLIAM LANGEWIESCHE

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September 26, Acclaimed Author and One of the Country's Leading Authorities on the Political Culture of the Civil War Era.

James Atlas
November 7, Renowned Author and National Book Award Nominee for "The Great Pretender."

The Lana'i Visiting Artist Program invites you to this special event sponsored by **Continental Airlines.** Join Mr. Holzer and Mr. Atlas in an intimate living-room setting at the **Lodge at Koele®** as part of this series which showcases celebrated literary, culinary, musical and fine artists. The events are free to all island of Lana'i guests.

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CLASSICAL MUSIC

IN TOWN

Mostly Mozart—Final concerts of the festival's season. Aug. 19 at 8: Gerard Schwarz conducts the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra in Beethoven's Symphony No. 2, Mendelssohn's Piano Concerto No. 1 (with Jean-Yves Thibaudet), and Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante for Winds (K. 297b). . . . ¶ Aug. 20 at 8: I Solisti Veneti, a chamber orchestra conducted by Claudio Scimone, offers Boccherini's "La Casa del Diavolo" Sinfonia and concerted works by Vivaldi, Tartini, Donizetti, and Rossini. . . . ¶ Aug. 21-22 at 8: Mr. Schwarz leads the Festival Orchestra in selections from Beethoven's "The Creatures of Prometheus," Strauss's Divertimento, and Mozart's "Coronation" Mass; the last features soprano Ying Huang, mezzo-soprano Susanne Mentzer, tenor Gregory Turay, bass-baritone Klaus Mertens, and the Dessoff Choirs. . . . **Note:** Pre-concert recitals, open to ticket holders, begin every concert evening at 7. (Avery Fisher Hall. For information about tickets for all Mostly Mozart events, call 721-6500.)

"Russian Rhythms on Broadway"—Trinity Church's Slavic summer series. Aug. 20 at 1: The Manhattan Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Richard Auldon Clark, offers music by Glinka and Rimsky-Korsakov, in addition to Glière's Concerto for Soprano and Orchestra (featuring Louise Toppin). . . . ¶ Aug. 27 at 1: Mark Shapiro directs I Cantori di New York in "Song of Solomon," composed in 1975 by Sergei Slonimsky, a Leningrad-born modernist and the nephew of the late musical lexicographer Nicolas Slonimsky. Arrangements of Russian folk music round out the program. (Broadway at Wall St. No tickets necessary. The series continues through Sept. 3.)

"If Love Be the Food of Musick"—A one-woman show in which Zoë Vandermeer portrays the lunatic daughter of the composer Francesco Barsanti, reminiscing about life and performing songs by Baroque composers. (Cornelia Connelly Theatre, 220 E. 4th St. Aug. 20 at 7, Aug. 22 at 6, Aug. 24 at 7:15, Aug. 26 at 9:30, Aug. 27 at 6:45, Aug. 28 at 7, and Aug. 29 at 10. For information about tickets, call 888-374-6436.)

Bargemusic—Aug. 20 at 7:30 and Aug. 23 at 4: Tenor Brad Diamond, violinist Carmit Zori, and pianist Mihae Lee perform Schubert's two obbligato songs, "Auf dem Strom" and "Der Hirt auf dem Felsen"; cellist Ronald Thomas assists the instrumentalists in Schumann's G-Minor Piano Trio. . . . ¶ Aug. 21 at 7:30: Cynthia Phelps and pianist Warren Jones perform works by Beethoven, Falla, Schumann, and Brahms (his Sonata No. 2). . . . ¶ Aug. 27 at 7:30 and Aug. 30 at 4: Presenting Martinů's Madrigals for Violin and Viola, in addition to string quintets by Mozart (in D Major) and Mendelssohn (in A Major). . . . ¶ Aug. 28 at 7:30: The Apollo Trio performs piano trios by Debussy, Beethoven (the "Ghost"), and Dvořák (in F Minor, Op. 65). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061.)

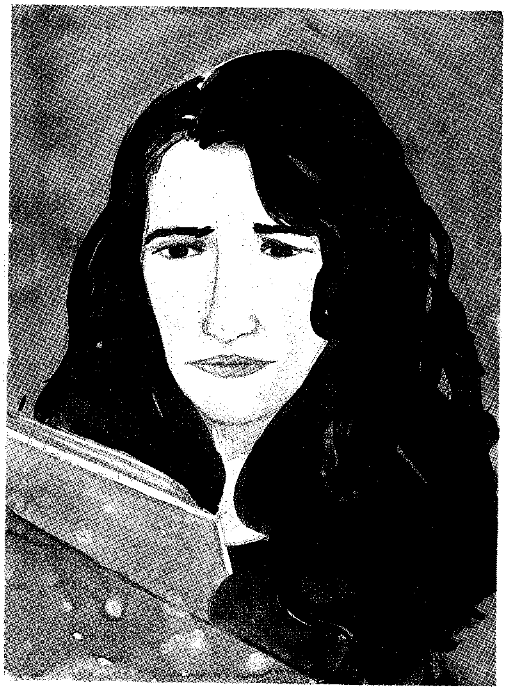
Summergarden—Final performances of the Museum of Modern Art's summer contemporary-music series. Aug. 21-22: Violinist Tom Chiu and pianist Eric Hubner offer works by Cage, Copland (his Sonata for Violin and Piano), Carter, Aaron Jay Kernis, and Jon Deak. . . . ¶ Aug. 28-29: String quartets by Ursula Mamlok, Ornette Coleman, Philip Glass, Joan Tower, and John Zorn, played by the Flux String Quartet. (Museum of Modern Art, Sculpture Garden, 14 W. 54th St. Evenings at 8:30. No tickets necessary.)

"Sundays on the Island"—Aug. 23 at noon: Pianist David Korevaar performs Chopin's F-Minor Ballade and excerpts from Book One of Bach's "Well-Tempered Clavier." . . . ¶ Aug. 30 at noon: Soprano Cleo Reiss and cellist Iris Regev, assisted by pianist Ilan Rechtman, offer works by Rossini, Bellini, Gounod, Beethoven, and Saint-Saëns. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. For information about tickets, call 718-885-2478.)

Salon Soirées—Aug. 23 at 6 and 8: Pianist Lara Downes performs three preludes, two waltzes, and the "Rhapsody in Blue" by Gershwin, as well as jazz-inspired pieces by his European contemporaries Auric, Castelnuovo-Tedesco, and Stravinsky (his "Piano Rag Music"). . . . ¶ Aug. 30 at 6 and 8: Songs and arias by Schubert, Rossini, and others, performed by soprano Cleo Reiss and pianist Ilan Rechtman. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. No tickets necessary.)

OUT OF TOWN

Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival—Aug. 19 at 8: A program crafted to underscore Western responses to Asian music includes a selection of Japanese traditional music, Claude Vivier's "Pulau Dwata" (written following a stint in Bali), Debussy's "Prélude à l'Après-midi d'un Faune" (in Schoenberg's chamber arrangement), Colin McPhee's "Balinese Ceremonial Music," and Fauré's C-Minor Piano Quartet. . . . ¶ Aug. 22 at 8: Chamber works by Copland, Gershwin, Eric Ewazen, and Ned Rorem. . . . ¶ Aug. 25 at 8: The festival concludes with a program of South American chamber pieces, by Ginastera, Villa-Lobos, Ernesto Nazareth, and Astor Piazzolla. (Bridgehampton Presbyterian Church, Montauk Highway, Bridgehampton, N.Y. 516-537-6368.)



Pianist Martha Argerich, at Tanglewood.

CHRIS CURRY

Glimmerglass Opera—Final performances of the season. Aug. 20 and Aug. 22 at 8: Handel's "Partenope," with soprano Lisa Saffer and countertenor David Daniels. . . . ¶ Aug. 21 at 8 and Aug. 24 at 2: "Tosca." . . . ¶ Aug. 22 at 1:30: "Falstaff." . . . ¶ Aug. 23 at 2: Virgil Thomson's "The Mother of Us All." (Cooperstown, N.Y. 607-547-2255.)

Tanglewood—Final classical concerts of the season. Aug. 20 at 8:30: The wife-and-husband team of mezzo-soprano Mitsuko Shirai and pianist Hartmut Höll present a lieder recital of songs by Brahms, Wolf, Liszt, Szymanowski, and Schoenberg. . . . ¶ Aug. 21 at 8:30: Charles Dutoit conducts the Boston Symphony in Debussy's "Petite Suite" (in an orchestral arrangement by Henri Büsser), Bruch's Violin Concerto No. 1 (with Sarah

Chang), and Stravinsky's "Petrushka" (in its 1911 version). . . . ¶ Aug. 22 at 8:30: Mr. Dutoit and the Boston Symphony offer Bartók's "Dance Suite," Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 3 (featuring the always astounding Martha Argerich, appearing in her surprisingly belated Tanglewood début), and Mussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition" (in Ravel's classic orchestration). . . . ¶ Aug. 23 at 2:30: The Boston Symphony, conducted by Yan Pascal Tortelier, plays Berlioz's "Béatrice et Bénédict" Overture, Elgar's Cello Concerto (with Mischa Maisky, also in his first Tanglewood appearance), Ravel's "Ma Mère l'Oye" Suite, and Milhaud's "Le Boeuf sur le Toit." . . . ¶ Aug. 23 at 8:30: Claudio Scimone leads I Solisti Veneti in works by Rossini, Cimarosa, Vivaldi, Puccini (his "Crisantemi"), and Verdi (a scaled-up reading of his String Quartet). . . . ¶ Aug. 25 at 8:30: Ms. Argerich and Mr. Maisky team up to perform Beethoven's G-Minor Cello Sonata, Schumann's Adagio and Allegro (Op. 70) and "Stücke im Volkston" (Op. 102), and Prokofiev's Cello Sonata. . . . ¶ Aug. 28 at 8:30: Hugh Wolff conducts the Boston Symphony in Haydn's Symphony No. 85 and Aaron Jay Kernis's "Too Hot Toccata"; Mstislav Rostropovich is the soloist in cello concertos by Haydn (in C Major) and Shostakovich (his First). . . . ¶ Aug. 29 at 8:30: Mr. Rostropovich trades his cello for a baton to lead the Boston Symphony in Shostakovich's Violin Concerto No. 1 (with Maxim Vengerov) and Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 6. . . . ¶ Aug. 30 at 2:30: Mr. Rostropovich conducts the Boston Symphony in Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, with the Tanglewood Festival Chorus and soloists Stephanie Blythe (mezzo-soprano), Anthony Dean Griffey (tenor), Egils Silins (bass), and a soprano to be announced. . . . ¶ Aug. 31 at 8:30: John Williams leads the Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra in an all-American program with violinist Joshua Bell. (Lenox, Mass. 800-274-8499.)

Bard Music Festival—The second of two talk-and-play weekends focussing on the life and works of Tchaikovsky. Aug. 21 from 10 A.M. to noon and 1:30 to 3: A symposium on Russian art, culture, and politics in the late nineteenth century. . . . ¶ Aug. 21 at 8:30: A program in which Tchaikovsky's music mixes with readings from the letters and diaries of his patroness, Nadezhda von Meck. . . . ¶ Aug. 22 at 10 A.M.: A panel discussion about the disparity between critical and popular responses to Tchaikovsky's music. . . . ¶ Aug. 22 at 2: In a concert crafted to underscore Western European influences on Tchaikovsky's style, pianist Todd Crow performs Schumann's "Arabeske" (Op. 18) and Fantasiestücke (Op. 111), as well as a pair of Liszt transcriptions; the Bard Festival Players offer Saint-Saëns's Septet; and the Moscow String Quartet plays Tchaikovsky's Quartet No. 2. . . . ¶ Aug. 22 at 8: Leon Botstein leads the Bard Festival Orchestra in a concert version of Tchaikovsky's opera "The Maid of Orleans." . . . ¶ Aug. 23 at 10 A.M.: A screening of Soviet-era films of Tchaikovsky ballets, with commentary provided by a panel that includes Irina Kolpolkova, a former prima ballerina with the Kirov Ballet. . . . ¶ Aug. 23 at 1:30: A recital of Tchaikovsky piano pieces that depict aspects of childhood. . . . ¶ Aug. 23 at 5: Mr. Botstein and the Festival Orchestra perform an all-Tchaikovsky concert that comprises his orchestration of the first movement of Beethoven's "Kreutzer" Sonata, his symphonic fantasies "The Tempest" and "Francesca da Rimini," and his "Manfred" Symphony. (Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y. 914-758-3226. . . . NOTE: Pre-performance lectures begin a half hour before each concert.)

Maverick Concerts—Aug. 22 at 8: A program of seventeenth-century Italian music, performed by the ensemble La Luna. . . . ¶ Aug. 23 at 3: A recital by violinist Jaime Laredo and cellist Sharon Robinson. . . . ¶ Aug. 29 at 8 and Aug. 30 at 3: James Buswell plays Bach's works for unaccompanied violin: the three sonatas on Saturday, the three partitas on Sunday. (Woodstock, N.Y. 914-679-8217.)

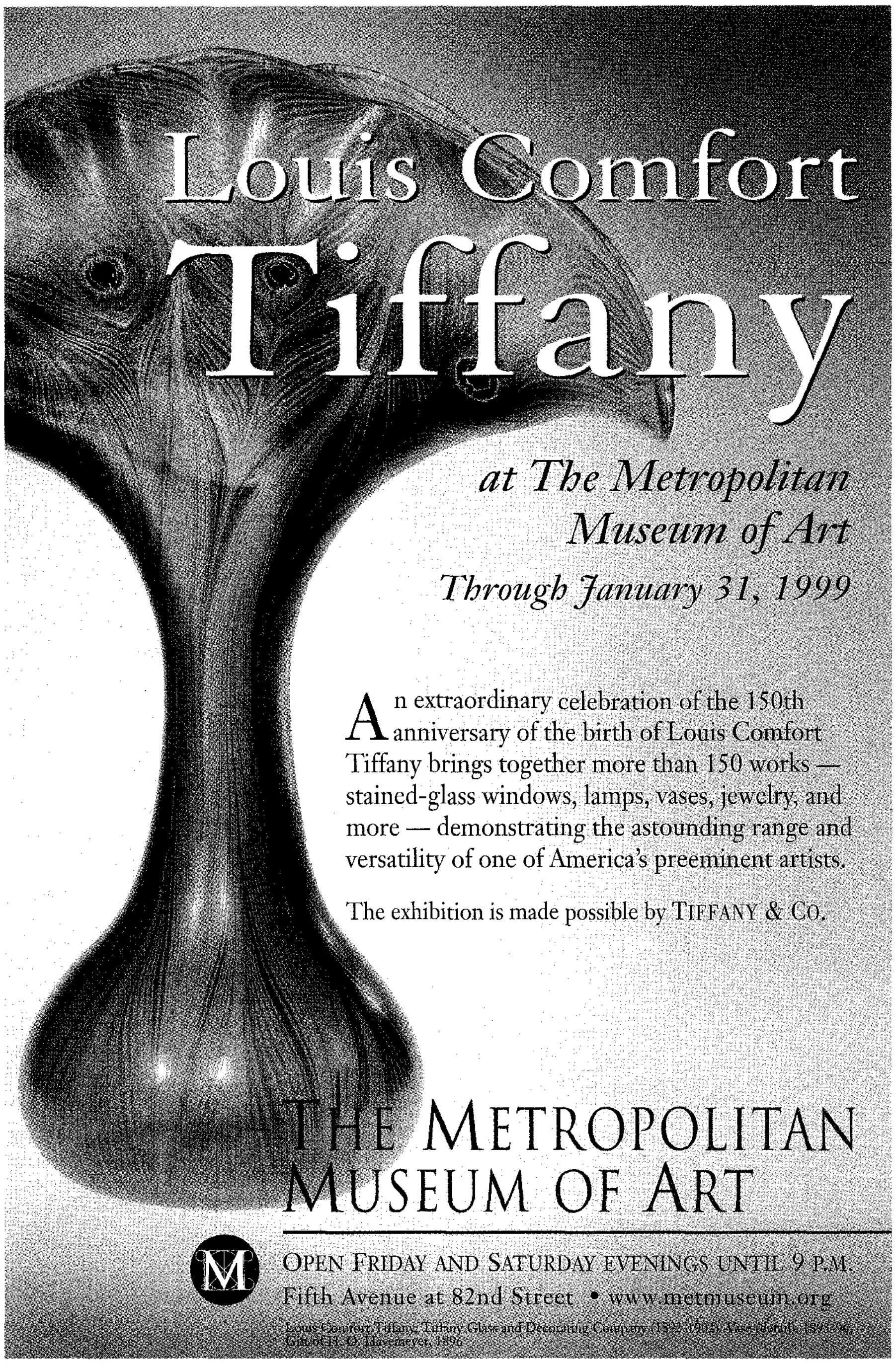
Music Mountain—Aug. 23 at 3: The Cassatt String Quartet performs Beethoven's Quartets in C-Sharp Minor (Op. 131) and B-Flat Major (Op. 130); David Leisner joins them for a guitar quintet by Boccherini. . . . ¶ Aug. 30 at 3: The Veronika String Quartet plays Prokofiev's Quartet No. 2, Beethoven's Quartet in A Major (Op. 18, No. 5), and Shostakovich's Piano Quintet (with James Tocco assisting). (Falls Village, Conn. 860-824-7126.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

The Horror! The Horror!—The Gowanus Canal is a stagnant, polluted waterway that sits festering in the heart of Brooklyn like an open wound. But the real tragedy is that this wouldn't be the case if only the city could manage to complete a ten-million-dollar project to restore a flushing pump and tunnel at its head (which was supposed to be up and running this spring). Perhaps the Gowanus will never be as clean as it was when George Washington and his army retreated across its banks to escape the British, during the Battle of Long Island, but a little fresh water will go a long way toward turning it into a source of neighborhood pride. For a close-up look at the canal's present state, and a talk on what's planned for its future, John Muir and Abu Moulta Ali, of the Brooklyn Center for the Urban Environment, offer a guided cruise of the canal aboard a fifty-two-foot motorboat. (Aug. 30 at 10 A.M. For more information, call 718-788-8500.)

Reading—Aug. 25 at 7:30: By novelist David Gates, poet Jean Valentine, and others, from their own work. (Meow Mix, 269 E. Houston St. Tickets at the door.)

Talk—Aug. 23 at 4:30: After a screening of films by Bill Plympton, the animator and director discusses his work. (American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. 718-784-0077.)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at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

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Louis Comfort Tiffany, Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company (1892–1902), Vase (detail), 1893–96, Gift of H. O. Havemeyer, 1896

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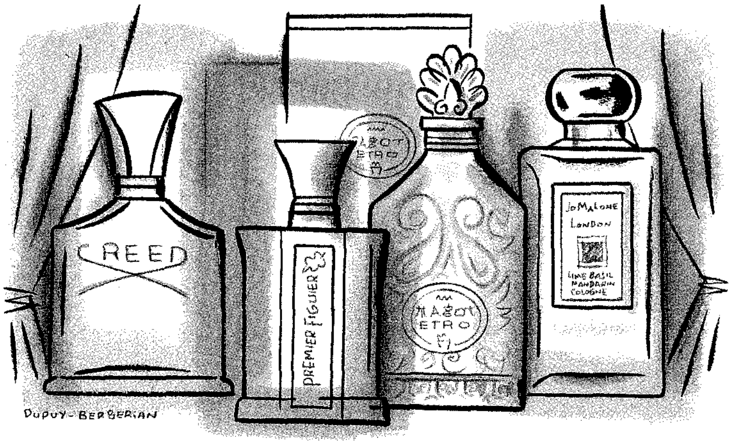
ON AND OFF THE AVENUE

The Sweet Smell of Excess

MOTHERS, when we were very young, reminded us to wash behind our ears, because cleanliness, of course, was next to godliness. Now, when we get that first daily look at ourselves in the bathroom mirror, godliness is the least of our worries; rather, we wonder how we can compete in today's unisexual, millennial environment without doing a little facial purification, hair refreshment, and personal-aroma definition. Fortunately, the boom in specialty toiletries shows no signs of abating. New products, based on every imaginable variety of animal, vegetable, and rough-hewn, dermis-scraping mineral, continue to proliferate, and they can now be found not just in the top department stores but in little shrines of their own, ranging from the stately Edwardian halls of Floris and Penhaligon's to the crisp, New Age temples of Aveda.



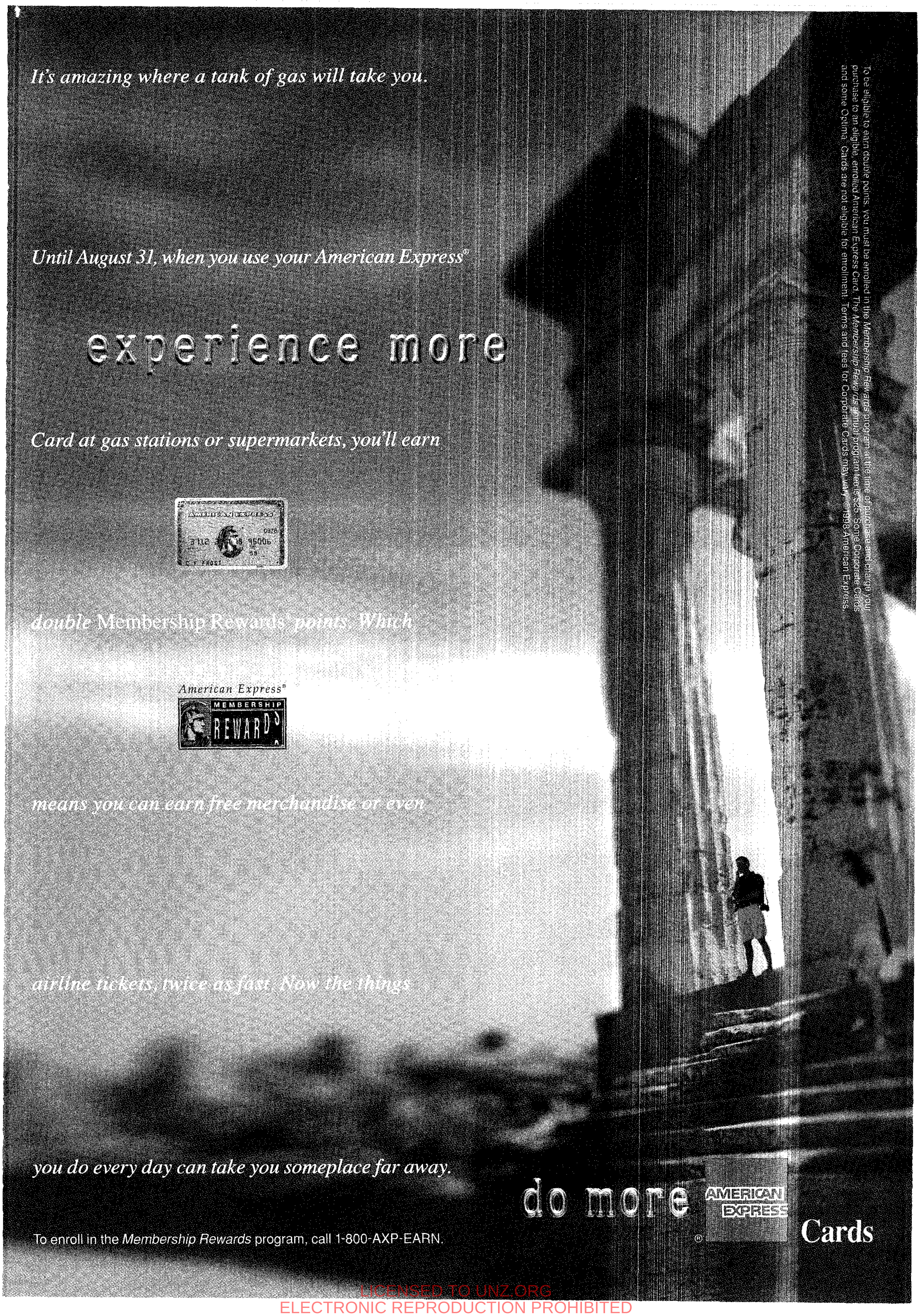
One of the best-outfitted new galleries is devoted to the aromatics of **Etro** (720 Madison Ave.; 317-9096), a Milanese textile firm that got into the fragrance business about ten years ago. The description of the men's cologne Messe de Minuit promises an experience out of "The Name of the Rose": "Gothic romances, details of darkness. Redolence of shadows, damp stone and spent wax." (Can you smell it now?) At the other end of the theological spectrum is a scent called Mahogany, which is described as "austere, virile, Calvinistic"; slap this on your cheeks and you're ready to face a bracing eternal damnation. The presentation of Etro's line of fantasy emollients is as extravagant as the prose that describes them. Cologne and toilet water come in cut-glass bottles with gilt stoppers ($77-$158); many of the scents are also available in moisturizing milks ($49) and bath foams ($46).

Aedes de Venustas (15 Christopher St.; 206-8674), which is bad Latin for "Temple of Beauty," is a funky boutique that might have been decorated by Norma Desmond on a tight budget—ornate cases spray-painted gold, fake-leopard-skin throws, and a shih tzu named Cocoa. However, it imports some venerable European fragrances. You may never become an actual princess, but you can smell like the Philadelphia girl who did: Creed, one of Europe's oldest perfumers, created Fleurissimo ($110) for Grace Kelly to wear on her wedding day. The Parisian firm L'Artisan Parfumeur develops fragrances ($25-$89) in the grand tradition of the court of the Sun King, favoring food notes: Thé pour un Été is a sunny cocktail of green tea, lemon, and grass, and Premier Figuier is a blend of fig and almond milk, which smells a little, but not disagreeably, like dirt.

The smartest new toiletries these days seem to be coming out of London rather than Paris. Last spring, the perfumer **Jo Malone** opened a boutique at Bergdorf Goodman (754 Fifth Ave.; 753-7300); a few weeks ago, there was a waiting list of four hundred people for her signature cologne, Lime Basil and Mandarin ($70). It's back in stock, but now the long lines are for another fragrance, called Amber and Lavender ($70).

The unfussily named Boston firm **Fresh** is about to open a store at 1061 Madison Avenue (800-373-7420) that will appeal to a range of fantasies, from the aquatic (Cascada soap, which the makers compare to a Polynesian waterfall) to the lactic. Fresh's popular Milk line of products features a cologne called Mukki, which is said to recall "a mother's embrace." Wouldn't Mom be pleased?

DUPUY-BERBERIAN



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THE MOVIES

OPENINGS

Blade—Wesley Snipes plays the Marvel comic-book hero, half-man, half-vampire, in this film directed by Stephen Norrington. Opening Aug. 21.

Concert of Wills: Making the Getty Center—A documentary by Susan Froemke, Bob Eisenhardt, and Albert Maysles, about the struggles that went into the building of the Los Angeles museum. Opening Aug. 26. (Film Forum.)

Dance with Me—Randa Haines's romance about two competitors (Vanessa L. Williams and Chayanne) in the World Open Dance Championship in Las Vegas. Also with Kris Kristofferson. Opening Aug. 21.

Dead Man on Campus—Two failing college students search for a suicidal roommate whose death will allow them to pass their courses by virtue of a mental-stress excuse. With Tom Everett Scott and Mark-Paul Gosselaar; directed by Alan Cohn. Opening Aug. 21.

The Eel—A film, based on Akira Yoshimura's novel "Sparkles in the Darkness," about a paroled wife killer who opens a barber shop that soon attracts a diverse clientele. Directed by Shohei Imamura. In Japanese. Opening Aug. 21. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

54—Steve Rubell's seventies disco as seen through the eyes of a club bartender. With Mike Myers (as Rubell), Ryan Phillippe, Salma Hayek, and Breckin Meyer; written and directed by Mark Christopher. Opening Aug. 28.

I Married a Strange Person—Newlyweds and psychic powers are the subjects of Bill Plympton's animated feature. Opening Aug. 28. (Angelika Film Center.)

A Merry War—Robert Bierman's version of George Orwell's 1936 satirical novel about love, "Keep the Aspidistra Flying." With Richard E. Grant and Helena Bonham Carter. Opening Aug. 28. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Next Stop, Wonderland—A romantic comedy about two young Bostonians (Hope Davis and Alan Gelfant) looking to change their lives. Directed by Brad Anderson. Opening Aug. 21.

See the Sea—A thriller about a mysterious backpacker who threatens the lives of a young mother and her child. Directed by François Ozon. In French. Opening Aug. 28. (Quad Cinema.)

Wrongfully Accused—A spoof of "The Fugitive," with Leslie Nielsen as the escaped prisoner. Also with Kelly Le Brock, Michael York, and Richard Crenna; written and directed by Pat Proft. Opening Aug. 21.

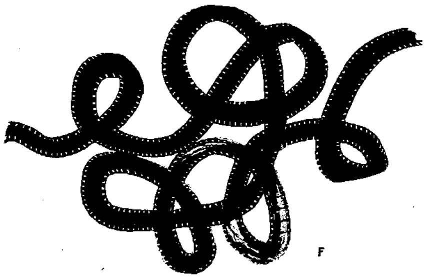
Your Friends & Neighbors—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening Aug. 19. (First & 62nd Cinemas and 19th Street East 6.)

FILM NOTES

(If a movie has been reviewed recently in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

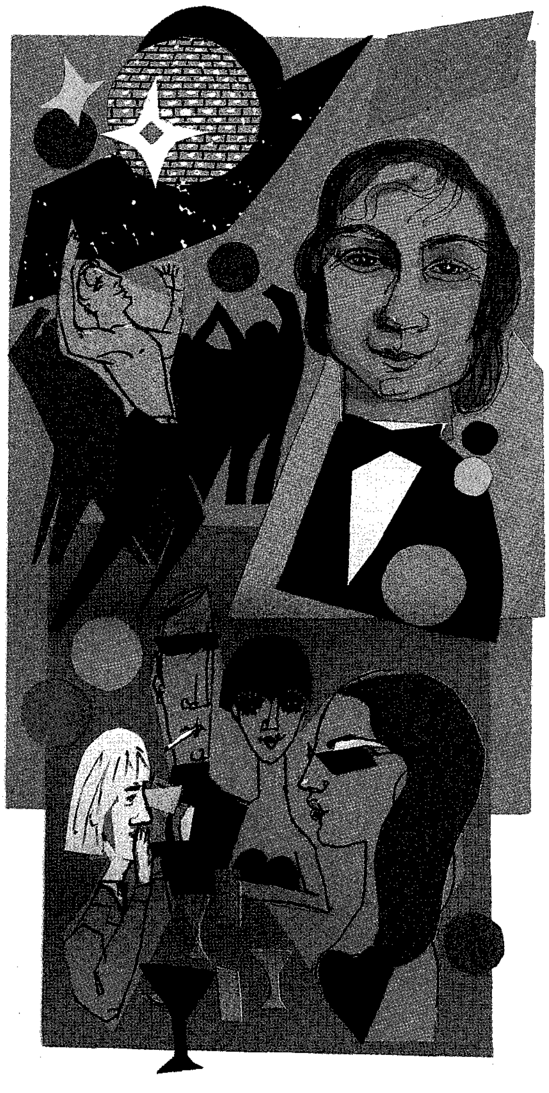
Anchors Aweigh (1945)—This Gene Kelly-Frank Sinatra musical has an abundance of energy, and you may feel it could be wonderful if it weren't so stupidly wholesome, and if you could just *do* something about Kathryn Grayson and José Iturbi. The sugary wholesomeness was the stock in trade of the producer, Joe Pasternak; characters in his movies always look scrubbed and sexless, and act embarrassingly young. Pasternak doesn't destroy Kelly's bounding vitality, however; this was the hit movie that made him a hugely popular star.—*Pauline Kael* (Walter Reade Theatre; Aug. 28-30.)

Billy's Hollywood Screen Kiss—When Billy (Sean P. Hayes) a self-advertising homosexual and unemployed photographer, spies the great-looking Gabriel (Brad Rowe) in an L.A. coffeehouse, he decides that the waiter is the perfect lead for his series of classic Hollywood screen kisses. Once you've appreciated the film's campy details, such as a fetching pair of earrings made of CDs, you



may find yourself longing for the angst-ridden homosexuals of old. With Holly Woodlawn.—*Daphne Merkin* (7/27/98) (Angelika Film Center and 19th Street East 6.)

Brute Force (1947)—The title is accurate: this is a crudely powerful prison picture, produced by Mark Hellinger, written by Richard Brooks, and directed by Jules Dassin. The essentially old-fashioned material was modernized by the use of sadistic scenes and such devices as having the power-mad warden (Hume Cronyn) suggest a homegrown Hitler. This is the kind of movie that is often called a man's picture; that is, fast, action-packed, pseudo-realistic. With Burt Lancaster, Charles Bickford, Ella Raines, and Yvonne De Carlo.—*P.K.* (Museum of Modern Art; Aug. 24-25.)



Opening August 28, Mike Myers in "54."

CORNEL RUBINO

The Chambermaid on the Titanic—Horty (Olivier Martinez) earns drinks and tips telling heavy-breathing, erotic stories, mostly fanciful, to his foundry mates in a bar back home in Lorraine. It's April, 1912, and he's just returned from Southampton, England, where he spent one night with Marie (Aitana Sánchez Gijón)—the night before the Titanic sailed. Zeppe (Aldo Maccione), a travelling actor, arrives, sees Horty's potential as a big-time earner on the circuit, and saves the film by liberating Horty (and us) from that dingy bar and its drooling patrons. To our relief, the director Bigas Luna's earnest concentration on sexual obsession and jealousy is replaced by a comical and prescient examination of post-Titanic showbiz. In French.—*Ken Marks* (Cinema II and Quad Cinema.)

Ever After—A sumptuous retelling of the Cinderella tale, with Drew Barrymore as the feisty stepdaughter and Anjelica Huston as the conniving stepmother who wants to marry her own daughter off to the handsome prince (Dougray Scott). The film swings from farce to soap opera and back again—but it's got enough girl-power moments to make a Spice Girls fan happy. Barrymore is sweet and amusing, but Huston gives the memorable performance—she swoops down on every actor's line like a hawk, leaving only gristle.—*Bruce Diones* (Beekman, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, 19th Street East 6, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Waverly.)

From Here to Eternity (1953)—Prewitt, the bugler-hero of James Jones's Dreiserian novel about Army life in Hawaii before Pearl Harbor, is a soldier who loves the Army, yet he believes that "if a man don't go his own way, he's nothin'." Jones's bulky book does such an honest job of storytelling that it triumphs over its pedestrian prose; the movie succeeds by the smooth efficiency of Fred Zinnemann's lean, intelligent direction, and by the superlative casting. Montgomery Clift's bony, irregularly handsome Prewitt is a hardhead, a limited man with a one-track mind, who's intensely appealing. Burt Lancaster has a role that's just about perfectly in his range as Sergeant Warden, the man's man who's also a ladies' man (the lady is Deborah Kerr); Frank Sinatra, in his first straight acting part, surprised audiences with a softly modulated, likable performance as Maggio, who loses his life because of his high spirits; Ernest Borgnine is the smiling, innocently murderous Fatso; Donna Reed is the respectable prostitute.—*P.K.* (Walter Reade Theatre; Aug. 24-25.)

Halloween: H20—The title of Steve Miner's new film raises hopes that Michael Myers, everybody's favorite bogeyman from "Halloween," might return to Haddonfield, Illinois, and spend the whole of the movie in public swimming pools; sadly, it refers to nothing more outré than the twenty years that have passed since John Carpenter's original shocker. Most of the innumerable sequels were tripe, but this one has a freshness—even a kind of wit—mixed in with all the blood. It also has Jamie Lee Curtis, who was always the mainstay of the "Halloween" saga at its best. Her character, Laurie, has now found a job as the headmistress of a school in California. Myers tracks her down, wasting a few disposable teen-agers on the way; finally, Laurie and her nemesis come face to face, or, at any rate, face to mask. The movie is not the exercise in undiluted fright that Carpenter gave us; nor, perhaps, should we expect it to be.

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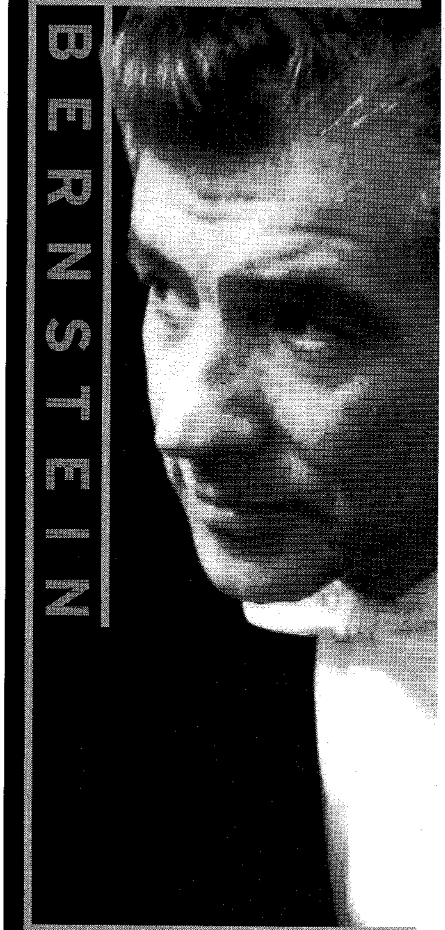

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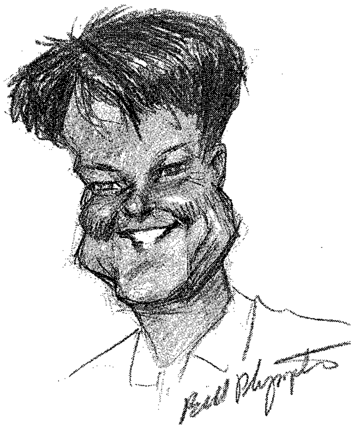
Viewers of this stuff are less innocent than ever before, and Miner trades efficiently on their knowing glee.—*Anthony Lane* (Reviewed in A Critic at Large, 8/10/98.) (Astor Plaza, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village East Cinemas.)

King Kong (1933)—This is the tale of one lucky moviemaker. It's got two epic antiheroes: the mythic dinosaur-size ape and the famous jungle-film director patterned after Frank Buck and played by Robert Armstrong. At the beginning, Armstrong complains about pundits who charge that his movies would have more draw if they contained some romance. So he scours New York City soup lines for a woman needy enough to join his biggest and most mysterious adventure—a secret journey to Skull Island in search of the fabled Kong. Fay Wray turns out to be a plucky leading lady with a powerful set of lungs, and Kong is, if anything, overly coöperative in filling out Armstrong's love story—especially in the restored footage, in which Kong gently strips Wray's clothing.—*Michael Sragow* (Walter Reade Theatre; Aug. 29-30.)

Lethal Weapon 4—This Warner Bros. franchise is so depressingly familiar that the brief time spent on reintroducing the old-timers—Mel Gibson's manic cop, Danny Glover's L.A.P.D. family man, Joe Pesci's foulmouthed sidekick—comes as a relief. The negligible plot (it has something to do with counterfeiting) is poorly paced, and there's nothing much to do but watch how director Richard Donner sets up his stunt-filled action bits. It's take-the-money-and-run filmmaking, with the actors practically winking their dialogue at each other.—*B.D.* (Coronet Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, State, and Village Theatre VII.)



Self-portrait by Bill Plympton ("I Married a Strange Person," in Openings, and AMMI, in Revivals).

Mafia!—Jim Abrahams ("Airplane!") takes on the "Godfather" dynasty in his latest exclamation-pointed satire, but this one is pretty wheezy. It's not just that the jokes are old, it's that the form itself has been worn out—TV comedies nowadays seem to spoof Hollywood films every week.—*B.D.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema II, Embassy 1, Lincoln Square, and Village East Cinemas.)

Mark Twain's America—Stephen Low's diminutive 3-D documentary about our greatest humorist should be given credit for at least achieving an element of surprise. What other recent movie director has had the courage to hurl an author at his audience instead of an asteroid? The movie, which clocks in at just under an hour and uses nineteenth-century photography as well as scenes with contemporary Twain groupies, is given a Southern-fried narration by an actor who apparently thinks that the bewhiskered man in the white suit is Colonel Sanders. A close encounter with a champion jumping frog that can bound twenty feet almost makes the nose-ache from the Imax goggles worth it.—*Jay Fielden* (Lincoln Square.)

The Mask of Zorro—Antonio Banderas cuts a dashing figure as Johnston McCulley's Robin Hood-like hero, but director Martin Campbell's lumpy direction doesn't coalesce into anything much beyond a pleasant assembly of set pieces. Still, there are some wonderful moments, particularly Banderas's rousing swordplay-as-foreplay scenes with his gorgeous co-star, Catherine Zeta-Jones, and his flamboyantly choreographed duelling scenes with the glinty-eyed Anthony Hopkins, who trains Banderas like a Jedi knight.—*B.D.* (84th Street Sixplex, 19th Street East 6, Olympia, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, State, 34th Street Showplace, and Village East Cinemas.)

The Negotiator—The summer's first action film that's as rich in character as it is in suspense. The hypertense plot—a hostage negotiator (Samuel L. Jackson) takes some hostages of his own while another police strategist (Kevin Spacey) tries to persuade him to give up—allows ample room for two well-modulated performances. The movie is packed with terrific supporting roles—particularly the late J. T. Walsh.—*B.D.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, 84th Street Sixplex, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Showplace, and Village East Cinemas.)

The Parent Trap—You might think that Martha Stewart was behind this remake of the classic Hayley Mills trifle about identical twins (here played by Lindsay Lohan) trying to reunite their divorced parents. This time around, the twins' father (Dennis Quaid) is a rich vintner in the Napa Valley, and Mom (Natasha Richardson) is a famous London wedding-gown designer. Director Nancy Meyers seems to be aiming at acquisitive baby boomers, not kids: she makes us salivate over china and lush gardens, and resentful of the human beings blocking our view.—*Sarah Kerr* (Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema I, Guild, Lincoln Square, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Village East Cinemas.)

Saving Private Ryan—Steven Spielberg's new picture, one of his best, is a sandwich. The meat of the tale concerns a bunch of U.S. Army Rangers who are sent into Normandy to rescue the sole survivor of four brothers. On either side of this bold endeavor you get half an hour of unyielding combat: first, the D Day landings on Omaha Beach, and later, a consummate last stand in which too few Americans try to hold a bridge against too many Germans and too many tanks. Spielberg has arranged his violence into a semblance of pure disorder. The illusion holds, complete with severed limbs and wellsprings of blood, and it feels honorable; Spielberg's preachy movies can be an awful grind, but, apart from a disposable coda, this new work is too swift (and often too inaudible) to weigh you down.—*A.L.* (8/3/98) (Chelsea West, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, Murray Hill Cinemas, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, Village Theatre VII, and Ziegfeld.)

Schindler's List (1993)—The story of Oskar Schindler (Liam Neeson), a dashing and resourceful German Catholic businessman who saved more than a thousand Polish Jews from almost certain annihilation by the Nazis, is extraordinary even by the standards of Holocaust literature. Steven Spielberg's film, adapted by Steven Zaillian from the 1982 book by Thomas Keneally, runs better than three hours and doesn't seem a minute too long. Spielberg respects the essential mystery of the protagonist's heroism, and uses his prodigious skills to capture images of experiences that most of us thought we'd never see represented adequately on the screen. Along with Neeson, who is brilliant, the standouts in the large cast are Ralph Fiennes, Ben Kingsley, and Embeth Davidtz. The wonderfully expressive black-and-white cinematography is by Janusz Kaminski.—*Terrence Rafferty* (American Museum of the Moving Image; Aug. 30.)

Seventh Heaven—Benoît Jacquot's latest excavation of the female psyche stars Sandrine Kiberlain as the sexually unfulfilled young wife of a Paris surgeon. A hypnotist unlocks painful memories and helps her to feel desire again, but this terrifies her husband (Vincent

Lindon), who's grown used to her moping. As usual, Jacquot is hyperintelligent, technically brilliant, and a little too proud of his seriousness. In French.—*S.K.* (Quad Cinema.)

Smoke Signals—Chris Eyre's doleful comedy follows two young Coeur d'Alene Indians (Adam Beach and Evan Adams) from their Idaho reservation to Phoenix. One is a stud and the other a misfit, and at times the odd-couple pairing flirts with sitcom cuteness. But one comes away realizing how rare it is to see a film in which modern-day Native Americans are portrayed so sensitively.—*S.K.* (Angelika Film Center.)

Snake Eyes—Set in Atlantic City, on the night of a heavyweight boxing match, Brian De Palma's new thriller features an over-emoting Nicolas Cage as Rick Santoro, a corrupt local detective who is loud and chummy and wears hideous shirts. When the Secretary of Defense (Joel Fabiani), who's in town to catch the fight, is assassinated, Santoro's moment of glory arrives: he steps in to help his old buddy, Navy Commander Kevin Dunne (Gary Sinise), cover up the fact that he left the Secretary unguarded, and orders the police to search for a suspicious-looking brunette in a blond wig (Carla Gugino). Santoro soon finds himself lost in the mists of a rapidly shifting story in which nothing is as it seems. In spite of its noirish glow, De Palma's thriller is oddly unsuspenseful. Although his vaunted technique and Hitchcockian effects are all here, there's no life in the story (co-written by De Palma and David Koepp), and the last-minute burst of sentimentality is

THEATRE ADDRESSES

(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Coronet Cinemas, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
86th Street East Twin, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Embassy 1, 2, and 3, Seventh Ave. at 47th St.
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Guild, 33 W. 50th St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
Regency, Broadway at 67th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
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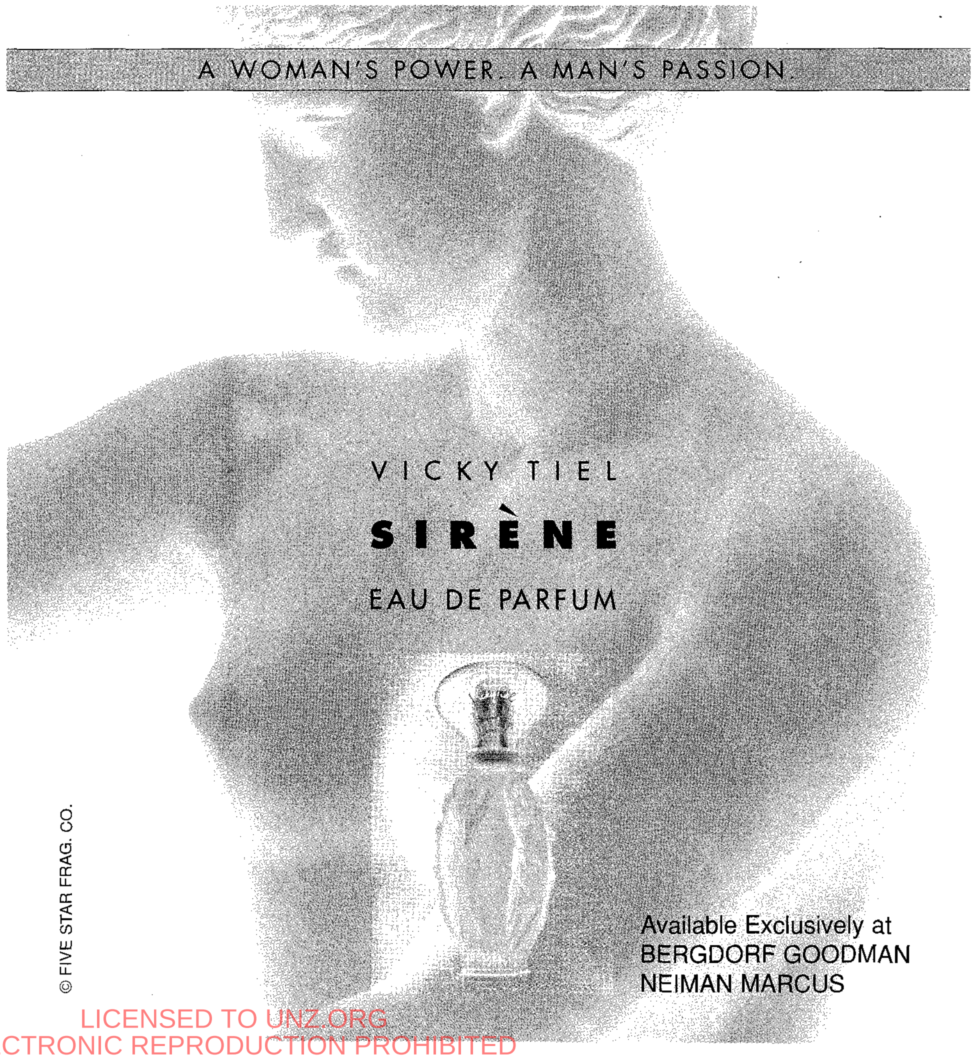

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especially lame.—*D.M.* (8/17/98) (Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, East 85th Street, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, Olympia, 72nd Street East, and State.)

The Spanish Prisoner—A young inventor (Campbell Scott) dreams up something called "the Process" that is destined to bring untold wealth to his bosses but not to himself. When he airs this grievance to a businessman whom he meets in the Caribbean (Steve Martin), he finds himself enmeshed in a plot from which there is no escape, unless you count the suspiciously loving attentions of a fellow-employee (Rebecca Pidgeon). If you're prepared to ignore the plot's absurdities, David Mamet's film is addictive, and Carter Burwell's score works on you like a massage. The film also offers the sharpest and most quizzical work that Steve Martin has turned in for some time.—*A.L.* (4/13/98) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Village East Cinemas.)

Sweet Bird of Youth (1962)—Paul Newman as the gigolo Chance Wayne and Geraldine Page as the battered, fading star Alexandra Del Lago, in Richard Brooks's slicked-up version of Tennessee Williams's flamboyant pop fantasy. When Newman's bare chest isn't being fumbled at and crooned over by Page, it's being pawed and picked at by Shirley Knight, who plays his fresh-faced girlfriend, Heavenly Finley. This hysterical twaddle features a sadistic attack on Newman, engineered by Heavenly's father (Ed Begley), a crooked political boss, and a climactic telephone soliloquy by Page; we hear her part of a long-distance conversation with Walter Winchell, who convinces her that, far from being a flop in her last picture, she has scored her greatest hit. Rip Torn and Mildred Dunnock are also involved in the madness.—*P.K.* (A Different Light Bookstore; Aug. 23.)

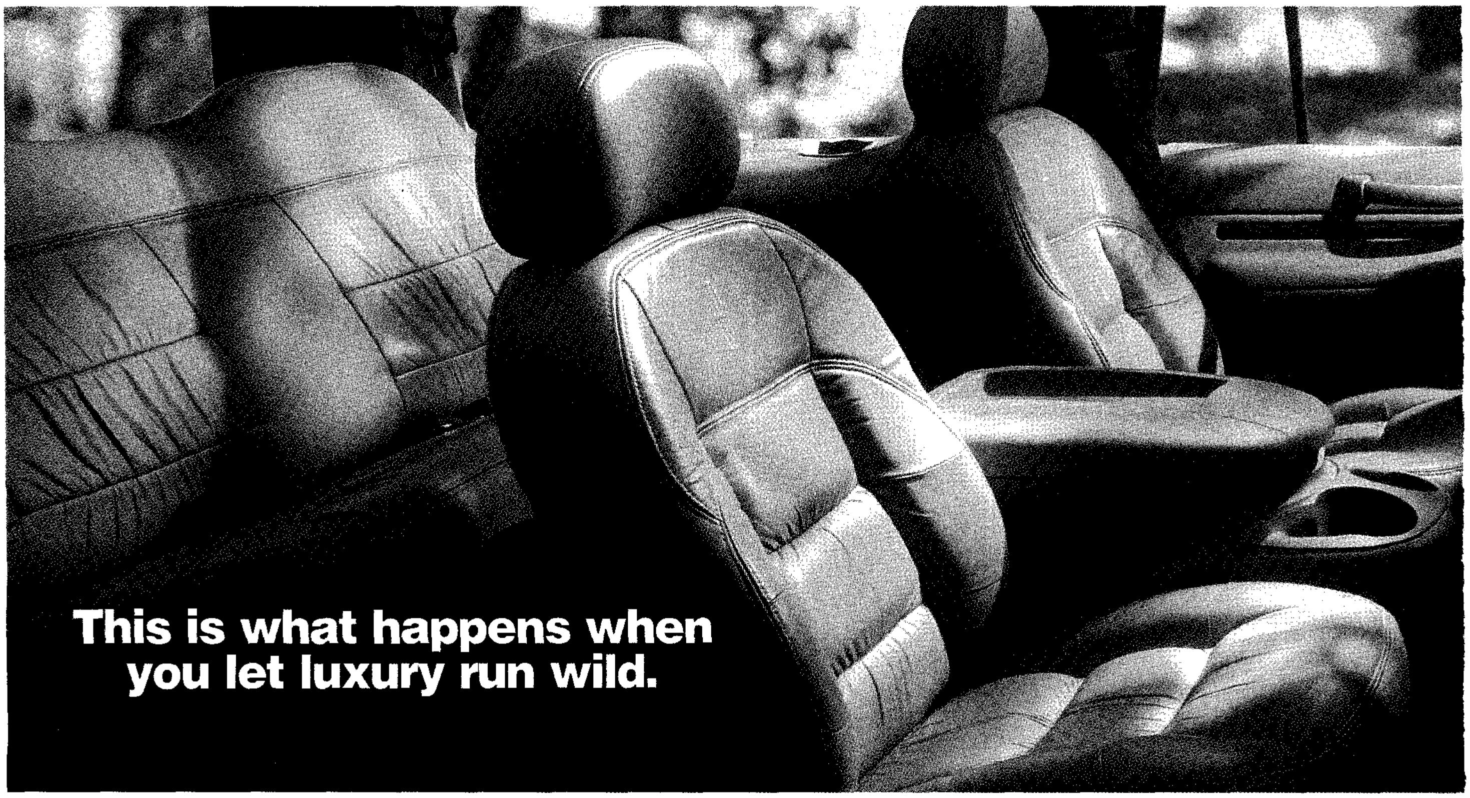
There's Something About Mary—The Farrelly Brothers, who have tipped the outrageousness scale before ("Dumb and Dumber," "Kingpin"), come up with some great new gross-out gags in this romantic comedy. The star, Cameron Diaz, in her Olivia Newton-John haircut, is the perfect naïve foil—she looks like she never knows what hit her. As the two loopy guys who are in love with her, Matt Dillon and Ben Stiller are garishly charming and full of desperate and irreverent ploys to get the girl. The film is packed with tasteless jokes (the best of them are crudely sexual), and it has a refreshing mean-spiritedness.—*B.D.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Showplace, and Village East Cinemas.)

The Thief—Considering that Pavel Chukhrai's movie is set in the Soviet Union in the early nineteen-fifties, it's pretty easy to watch. The center of events is a young boy (Misha Philipchuk), whose mother takes up with a handsome and immoral soldier called Tolyan (Vladimir Mashkov). The three of them scoot from one set of lodgings to the next, armed with little but a sack of stolen silverware; the movie is, among other things, a dark Dickensian comedy of the nomadic—of the need to live by one's wits. As the film moves, rather too hastily, toward its resolution, you might feel cheated by a sense of emotional patness; for the most part, however, there is real grit and sting in this slight tale. In Russian.—*A.L.* (7/20/98) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Western—French New New Wave director Manuel Poirier's charming road movie, in which a Mutt and Jeff pair of guys yo-yo their way up and down the coast of Brittany. Paco (Sergi López), a Spanish shoe salesman, picks up a shiftless Russian hitchhiker, Nino (Sacha Bourdo, in his first film role), who contrives to steal his car. When Paco catches up with Nino, he pounds the crap out of him. Naturally, he feels remorse, and before you know it, the two have become road buddies. Their picaresque misadventures take them genially through the polycultural France that was evident during the World Cup matches. In French.—*Jeff Gustavson* (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

ALSO PLAYING

AIR BUD: GOLDEN RECEIVER: Chelsea Cinemas, Embassy 1, Gotham Cinema, and Lincoln Square. . . . **ARMAGEDDON** (reviewed in our issue of 7/13/98): Chelsea Cinemas, Embassy 2, Orpheum VII, Sutton, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **THE AVENGERS:** Coronet Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, State, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **BASEKETBALL:** Criterion Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Waverly. . . . **THE BEST MAN:** Eastside Playhouse and Quad Cinema. . . . **BUFFALO '66:** Angelika Film Center, Cinema 3rd Avenue, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **CITY OF ANGELS:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **DEEP IMPACT** (5/18/98): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **DISTURBING BEHAVIOR:** Chelsea Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, State, and Waverly. . . . **GADJO DILO:** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **THE GOVERNESS:** Paris. . . . **HENRY: PORTRAIT OF A SERIAL KILLER 2:** Angelika Film Center. . . . **HIGH ART:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **HOW STELLA GOT HER GROOVE BACK:** 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, State, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **THE LAST DAYS OF DISCO** (6/15/98): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **NIGHTS OF CABIRIA:** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema. . . . **THE OPPOSITE OF SEX:** Angelika Film Center, 59th Street East Cinema, and Regency. . . . **π:** Angelika Film Center. . . . **REGENERATION:** Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **RETURN TO PARADISE:** Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Village East Cinemas. . . . **SAFE MEN:** Angelika Film Center and First & 62nd Cinemas. . . . **SLUMS OF BEVERLY HILLS:** Angelika Film Center, Cinema I, and 62nd & Broadway. . . . **TITANIC** (12/15/97): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **UNMADE BEDS:** The Screening Room. . . . **WAR ZONE:** Film Forum. . . . **THE X-FILES:** Worldwide Cinemas.



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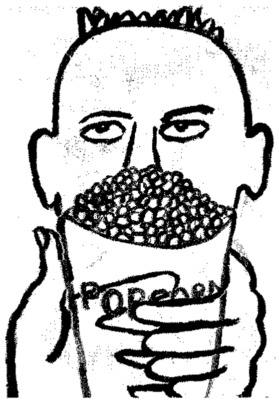
REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum 2 and 3, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—**theatre 2:** Through Aug. 20: "The Lady from Shanghai" (1948, Orson Welles). . . . Aug. 21-27: "The Birds" (1963, Alfred Hitchcock). . . . From Aug. 28: "Brazil" (1985, Terry Gilliam). . . . **theatre 3:** "The Young Girls of Rochefort" (1967, Jacques Demy; in French).

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Aug. 20 at 6 and Aug. 21 at 2:30: "A Matter of Life and Death" (1946, Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger). . . . Aug. 21 at 6 and Aug. 23 at 5: "Mr. & Mrs. Bridge" (1990, James Ivory). . . . Aug. 21 at 8:15 and Aug. 23 at 2: "Heaven and Earth" (1993, Oliver Stone). . . . Aug. 22 at 1: "Amateur" (1994, Hal Hartley). . . . Aug. 22 and Aug. 29 at 3: "Husbands and Wives" (1992, Woody Allen). . . . Aug. 24 at 2:30 and Aug. 25 at 6: "A Very Private Affair" (1962, Louis Malle; in French). . . . Aug. 24 at 6 and Aug. 25 at 2:30: "Brute Force" (†). . . . Aug. 27 at 2:30 and Aug. 30 at 5: "The Hudsucker Proxy" (1994, Joel Coen). . . . Aug. 27 at 6 and Aug. 29 at 1: "Obaltan" (1961, Yu Hyun-Mok; in Korean). . . . Aug. 28 at 2:30 and Aug. 31 at 6: "My Mother and Guest" (1961, Shin Sang-Ok; in Korean). . . . Aug. 28 at 7 and Aug. 30 at 1: "My Fair Lady" (1964, George Cukor). . . . Aug. 29 at 5: "The Lady Eve" (1941, Preston Sturges). . . . Aug. 31 at 2:30: "Love Affair" (1939, Leo McCarey). . . . Sept. 1 at 2:30: "Riders of the Purple Sage" (1925, Lynn Reynolds; silent). . . . Sept. 1 at 6: "The Big Trail" (1930, Raoul Walsh).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center (875-5600)—Through Aug. 20: Films from the Philippines. . . . ¶ A program of films starring Frank Sinatra. Aug. 21 at 2 and 6:30 and Aug. 22-23 at 6:30: "High Society" (1956, Charles Walters). . . . Aug. 21-23 at 4 and 8:35: "Some Came Running" (1958, Vincente Minnelli). . . . Aug. 24 at 2 and 6:40 and Aug. 25 at 2 and 9: "From Here to Eternity" (†). . . . Aug. 24 at 4:15 and 9 and Aug. 25 at 4:15: "The Joker Is Wild" (1957, Charles Vidor). . . . Aug. 26 at 2, 5:30, and 9:15: "Higher and Higher" (1944, Tim Whelan). . . . Aug. 26 at 3:45 and 7:30 and Aug. 27 at 4 and 7:50: "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" (1949, Busby Berkeley). . . . Aug. 27 at 2 and 5:50: "It Happened in Brooklyn" (1947, Richard Whorf). . . . Aug. 28 at 2 and 6:45 and Aug. 29-30 at 4 and 9: "Pal Joey" (1957, George Sidney). . . . Aug. 28 at 4:10 and 9, and Aug. 29-30 at 6:15: "Anchors Aweigh" (†). . . . Aug. 31 at 2 and 6:15: "On the Town" (1949, Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen). . . . Aug. 31 at 4 and 8:10: "The Tender Trap" (1955, Walters). . . . ¶ Aug 22-23 at 2: "42nd Street" (1933, Lloyd Bacon). . . . ¶ Aug. 25 at 6:45: A two-hour program of material from John Pierson's cable-television show "Split Screen. . . . ¶ Aug. 29-30 at 2: "King Kong" (†).



KAREN CALDICOTT

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—A program of films directed or produced by Steven Spielberg. Aug. 22 at 7 and Aug. 23 at 2: "Jurassic Park" (1993). . . . Aug. 29 at 2 and 7: "The Lost World: Jurassic Park" (1997). . . . Aug. 29 at 4:30: "Men in Black" (1997, Barry Sonnenfeld). . . . Aug. 30 at 2: "Schindler's List" (†). . . . ¶ Two programs of animated films by Bill Plympton. Aug. 22 at 2: "Mondo Plympton" (1997). . . . Aug. 22 at 4: "The Tune" (1992).

Brooklyn Museum of Art, Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000, ext. 230)—A program of Mexican films on which Gabriel Figueroa served as cinematographer. All films in Spanish, with English subtitles. Aug. 22 at 5: "The Pearl" (1948, Emilio Fernandez). . . . Aug. 29 at 5: "Nazarin" (1958, Luis Buñuel).

Bryant Park, Sixth Ave. at 42nd St.—Mondays, starting at dusk: free drive-in-style movie-going, beginning with coming attractions. The feature on Aug. 24 will be "Breakfast at Tiffany's" (1961, Blake Edwards). (Rain date is the following night.)

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St.—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On Aug. 23 at 7, the feature will be "Sweet Bird of Youth" (†); on Aug. 30 at 7, "The Night of the Iguana" (1964, John Huston).

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110)—A program of films by or about Michelangelo Antonioni. Aug. 19 at 7: "Chung Kuo China" (1972), a documentary. . . . Aug. 21 at 7: "Zabriskie Point" (1969). . . . Aug. 21 at 9 and Aug. 22 at 3: "The Passenger" (1975). . . . Aug. 22 at 8 and Aug. 23 at 3: "The Mystery of Oberwald" (1980). . . . Aug. 23 at 8 and Aug. 29 at 3: "Identification of a Woman" (1982). . . . Aug. 28 at 8 and 10 and Aug. 30 at 3: "For Me, to Make a Film Is to Live" (1995, Enrica Antonioni), a documentary about Michelangelo Antonioni. . . . ¶ Aug. 20 at 8 and 9:30: "Three Songs About Lenin" (1934, Dziga Vertov; in Russian). . . . ¶ Aug. 22 at 7: "Carriage Trade" (1972, Warren Sonbert). . . . ¶ Aug. 23 at 6: A program of short films by Andy Warhol, James Whitney, and others. . . . ¶ Aug. 26 at 8: "Plutonium Circus" (1998, George Ratliff). . . . ¶ Aug. 29 at 7 and 9: Short films by Jean Vigo. . . . ¶ Aug. 30 at 7 and 9: "L'Atalante" (1934, Vigo; in French, with no English subtitles).

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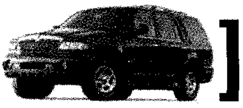

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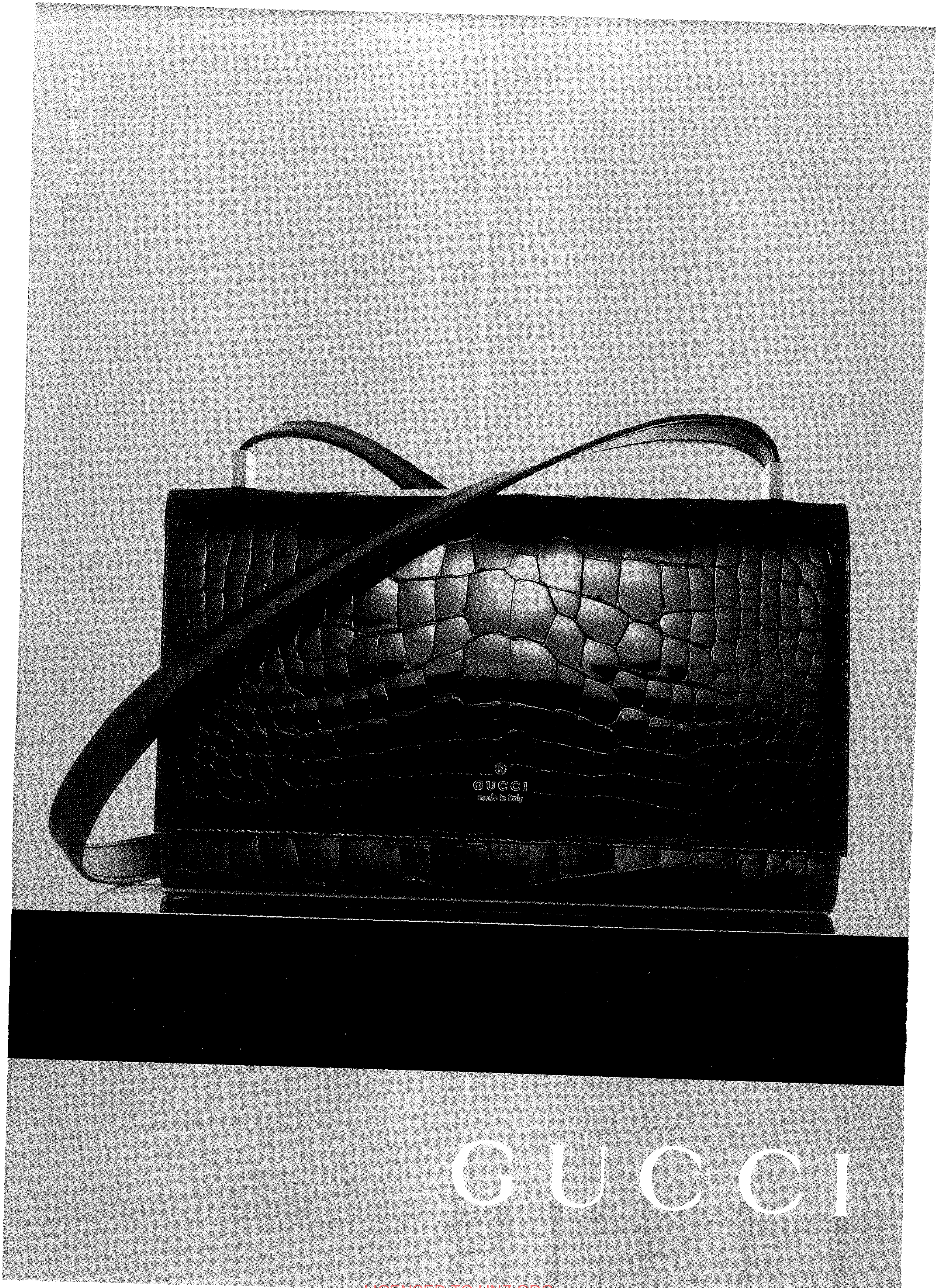
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THE NEW YORKER

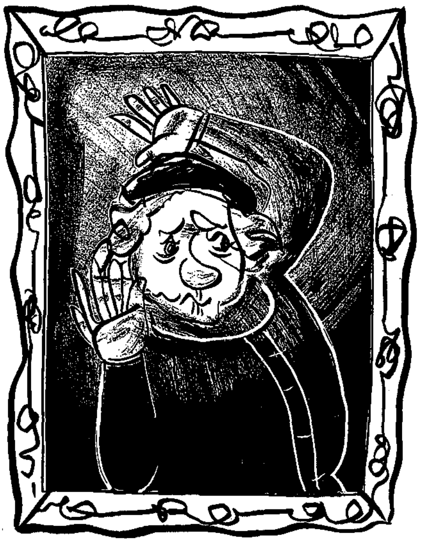
THE TALK OF THE TOWN

DEPT. OF ACTING OUT

There's something about Rembrandt that attracts wackos.

It was one exhibition that the National Gallery in London could have done without: at lunchtime on August 4th, a young man walked into a roomful of Rembrandts, took off his dress, and proceeded to squeeze, from a tube of yellow acrylic paint, the shape of a pound-sterling sign on the "Self Portrait at the Age of Sixty-three." At a London magistrate's court, the accused vandal, Vincent Bethell, made his point by once again stripping to the buff and shouting, "Society is mentally ill! Destroy society, long live humanity!" He was described in press reports as a student at Coventry University, and, since he was wearing nothing but righteous indignation beneath the dress, that might suggest a misplaced identification with the legendary Lady Godiva. She was the one who, to save Coventry from heavy taxation in the Dark Ages, consented to ride naked through its streets and be ogled by Saxons, doubtless muttering "Destroy society, long live humanity" through gritted teeth.

It gets worse, though, because Bethell was also a *fine-arts* student, which means that he had apparently been getting either too much Cindy Sherman or not enough Baroque 101. In any case, he couldn't have chosen a more inappropriate target for his political salvo. The pound sign suggests that Bethell had identified Rembrandt as a symbol of evil plutocracy; in fact, 1669, the year in which the artist painted "Self Portrait at the Age of Sixty-three," was not only his last but his most destitute. By the time Rembrandt died, he had been reduced to filching money from the inheritance left to his daughter Cornelia by her mother, his common-law wife, Hendrickje Stoffels. So the picture presumably regarded by the crazed attacker as embodying the triumphalism of "society" is actually a tragic representation of one of its more obvious victims. And though Rembrandt dispassionately surveys the wreckage of his own face, from the shiny, pitted-and-pocked nose to the loose flaps of skin hanging below the eye, he manages nonetheless to make of these features a noble wreck. The hands in the portrait, which had originally been painted open, one of them holding a brush, he eventually decided to show clasped, not in prayer but in a gesture of philosophical self-containment. It's hard to think of any painting from the sixteen-sixties which more profoundly expresses endurance in adversity—the capacity of humanity not to be enslaved by society but to transcend it.



Rembrandt

As a discriminating vandal, then, Mr. Bethell gets a failing grade. But his attack in the name of the naked truth prompts one to wonder why Rembrandt is so often the target of choice for the unhinged. Sure, Michelangelo, Leonardo, Dürer, and Picasso all take a hit now and then, but there seems to be something about the Dutch Master which makes him irresistible to the maladjusted. Perhaps they are drawn by a sense that, unlike, say, the masters of the High Renaissance, Rembrandt was a man of the people, who would certainly speak deeply to the ordinary spectator had he not been hijacked by the gilded and the greedy, and by a sense that he in some way understands, and even colludes in, the urge to deface and destroy. Indeed, perhaps this Bethell isn't just some pathetic exhibitionist with a limited grip on modern political theory but a cunning performance artist determined to attract ironic attention to the pauperized Rembrandt.

In any event, Rembrandt draws the deranged like wasps to a picnic. "The Night Watch," in the Rijksmuseum, in Amsterdam, has been attacked twice in recent memory, once with a knife and once with sulfuric acid. In the latter incident, the painting was saved from serious ruin only by a guard who had the good sense to spray it with distilled water. The great "Danae," in the Hermitage, one of Rembrandt's most sweetly erotic masterpieces, was not so lucky when it was both slashed and splashed with acid by a deranged Lithuanian in 1985. It took the museum's conservators twelve years of fastidious work before they could show the painting to the Russian public, and even then it was only partially restored.

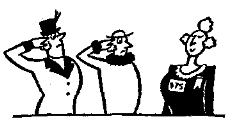
ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

In London the other day, it took less than twenty-four hours for the defaced Rembrandt to reappear, making the National Gallery's conservation staff the all-time-champion museum rapid-response team. The speedy conservators—Paul Ackroyd and Larry Keith, working under the direction of the National Gallery's experienced restorer David Bomford—got the painting into their lab minutes after the assault, so they were able to begin cleaning before the acrylic had dried. A relatively recent solid layer of varnish had acted as a shield, protecting Rembrandt's paint from much direct contact.

So the "Self Portrait at Age Sixty-three" is back on display, and a guidebook-toting visitor would never know that it had just been hideously defaced. Not that the museum's conservators are allowing themselves even a moment of self-congratulation. Clearly, they will continue to see traces of Bethell's yellow daubs for a long time to come. Rembrandt, on the other hand, his mouth turned slightly downward, seems, even more than usual, to wear an expression of faintly disgusted resignation. —SIMON SCHAMA

SILVER LINING DEPT.

Why the First Lady is getting America's sympathy vote.

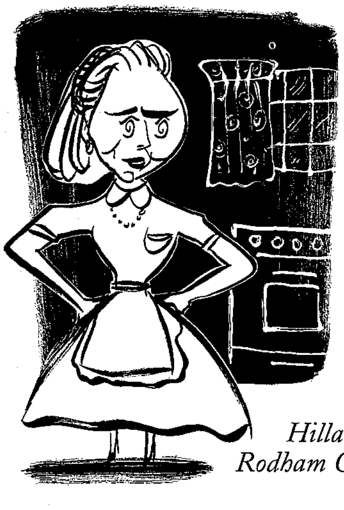


ONE warm evening last month, Hillary Rodham Clinton and a dozen or so women—friends, scholars of women's history, and members of her staff—were sitting around a table in the old family dining room of the White House. The meeting had been convened to plan an upcoming trip by the First Lady to Seneca Falls, New York, to celebrate the hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of the declaration of women's rights, but it turned into a wide-ranging bull session, lasting late into the night, about women in America. "She was pointing out that people identify feminism with anarchy, which they don't like," recalls one participant, Ellen Chesler, a longtime acquaintance of Mrs. Clinton and the biographer of the birth-control pioneer Margaret Sanger. How, Mrs. Clinton wondered, could feminism be made more palatable and less threatening to average Americans?

If she's still wondering, she might look at her own current standing in the polls. Ever since the 1992 campaign, political consultants have tinkered with strategies to soften Mrs. Clinton's image, banishing her headbands, diminishing her policy roles, dressing her in pastels, and nudging her toward more traditional causes. But no image overhaul has been as effective as the recent scandal makeover. In the seven months since Monica Lewinsky appeared, Mrs. Clinton has gone from seeming too controlling for some to seeming unable to control her own husband. Americans have never liked her better.

According to the Democratic pollster Celinda Lake, much of Mrs. Clinton's new support comes from women who identify themselves as non-feminists—in particular, older women, women who did not attend college, and Republican women. In some polls, Lake says, more than half of Republican women now view her favorably. "Before, these women regarded her as a challenge to their values, looking down her nose at them," Lake explains. "They now see her as a woman demonstrating their values." Values such as being poorly treated by men? Essentially, yes, Lake says: "Most women don't have power and control over the men in their lives." So, thanks to Monica, Hillary is, finally, just one of the girls.

Danielle Crittenden, the editor of the antifeminist *Women's Quarterly*, finds Mrs. Clinton's metamorphosis discombobulating: "She has been rather defanged in the eyes of her critics." Meanwhile the feminist social commentator Barbara Ehrenreich suggests that Mrs. Clinton has been too supportive of her husband: "He screws up, she covers up. Then they bond over it. I don't see what's so great about that."

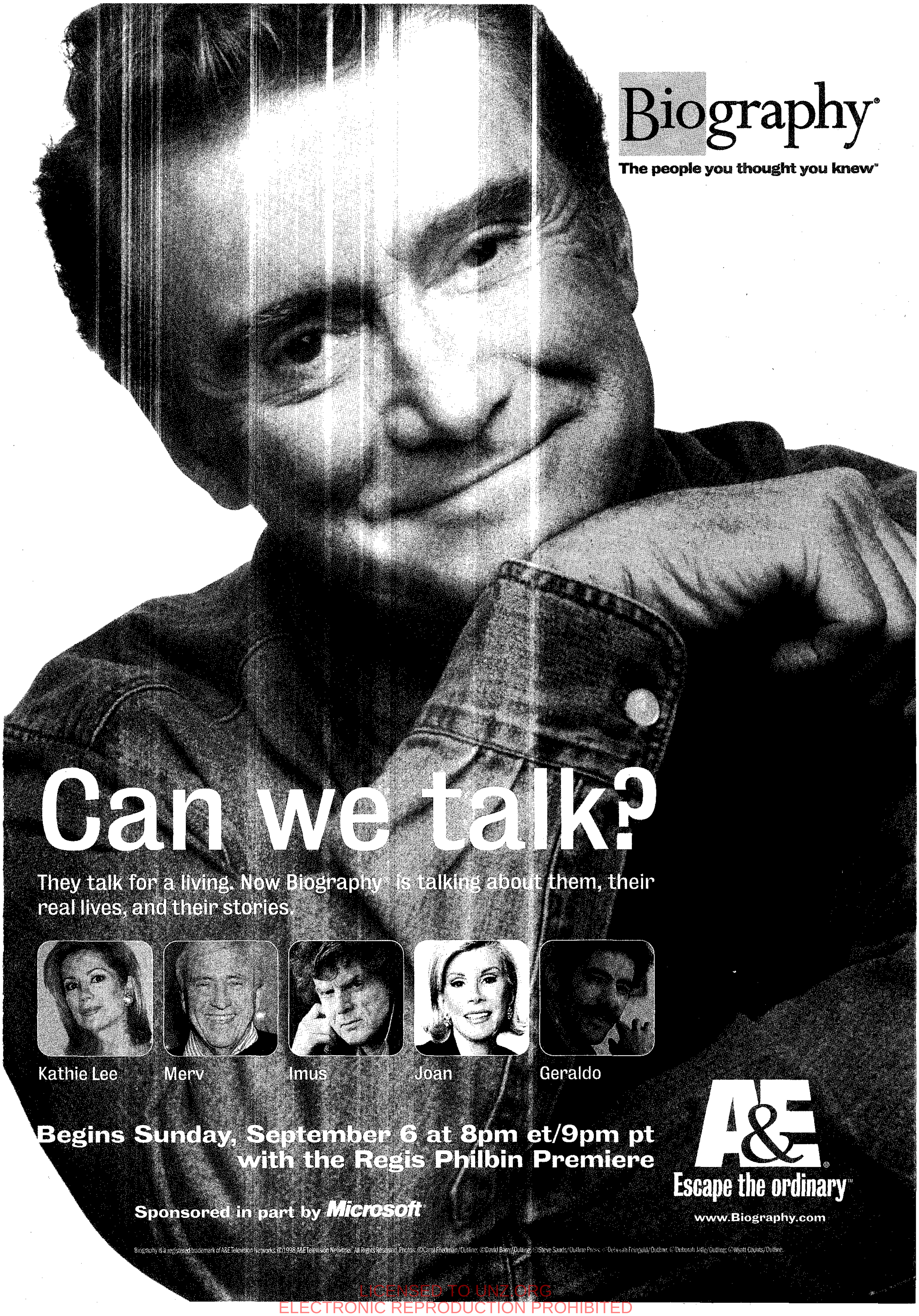


Hillary Rodham Clinton

While signs of human vulnerability can cripple Presidents, history implies that the opposite is true for a President's wife. Betty Ford, for instance, first became nationally popular when she underwent surgery for breast cancer, early in her husband's Presidency. Years later, when she acknowledged problems with prescription drugs and alcohol, Americans found her even more attractive. Nancy Reagan has had a similar experience. The breast-cancer treatment she underwent while in the White House and her devotion to her Alzheimer's-afflicted husband pretty much erased her Marie Antoinette image. Barbara Bush was beloved more on account of her weight, her white hair, and her candor about her battle with depression than in spite of them. Even Kitty Dukakis, who never got to the White House, was more popular after she admitted that she had been addicted to diet pills and had, on occasion, resorted to drinking hair spray.

Despite Mrs. Clinton's apparent composure in recent months, "She's really had a hard time," according to one of her friends. She and the President have made a point of being as affectionate as ever with each other in public, and White House aides recently adjusted his September schedule so that he will now accompany her on a trip to Ireland that she had planned to take alone. In private, some recent visitors have detected strain. A White House dinner last month ended with the men and women separating into two casual groups, almost, according to one guest, "as if Clinton couldn't wait to get away and be with the guys."

Image and reality are rarely identical in politics, and so it shouldn't be surprising that Mrs. Clinton, whom much of the country is learning to embrace as a victim, has probably seldom had more power than she has right now.



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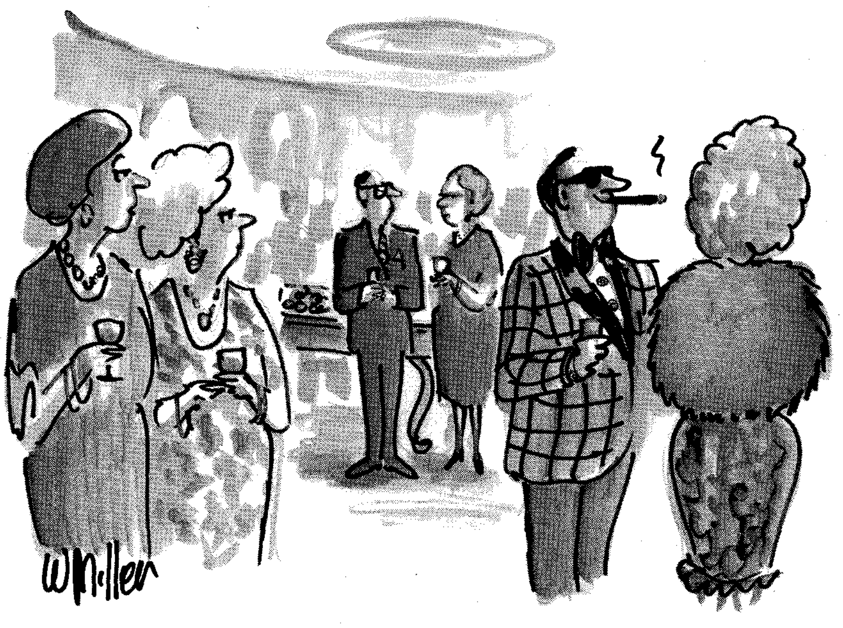
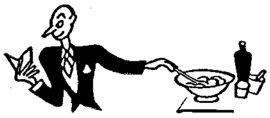
The First Lady is one of the very few people who can talk to the President about his legal troubles without risking having to tell a grand jury about it. Has she extracted the whole story from him? One friend says, "She's too tough not to have." —JANE MAYER



"Those two are recent Powerball money. The people by the table are old state-lottery money."

INK

Jason Epstein, master of the pencil and the paring knife.



THE chatter of book publishing is often the chatter of acquisition and advance, of seduction and sale, of dough, and yet it's a tone that quickly leads, guiltily, to an opposing one of elegy for editors like Maxwell Perkins, Horace Liveright, Joe Fox, and all the tweedy giants of New York publishing long gone. Until now, the persistence of Jason Epstein, at Random House, was sufficient answer to the routine aria. Owl-wise and pound-foolish, Epstein has walked the halls of publishing for forty-eight years, and he has upheld a standard of editing, agent-hondling, and author-schmoozing which gave away nothing to his blessed precursors.

Epstein turns seventy on August 25th, and he is nominally retiring from Random House in September (though he'll continue to work with some of his writers). He has nurtured what is called an impressive list. Over the years, he has been editor to Edmund Wilson, Stephen Spender, V. S. Pritchett, Vladimir Nabokov, W. H. Auden, Elizabeth Hardwick, Norman Mailer, E. L. Doctorow, Oscar Lewis, Philip Roth, Dwight Macdonald, Jane Jacobs, Elaine Pagels—well, who not, exactly? He can even take an amateur, like Sister Helen Prejean, and lead her to a document as remarkable as "Dead Man Walking." He's done it many times.

The guilty secret of Epstein's authors (if they admit it; and count this as an admission from one of them) is that while they prize his pencil and his gravelly estimations ("It's a masterpiece"; "It needs a little this and that"), they cannot resist his gift for pleasure. More specifically, they cannot resist being cooked for.

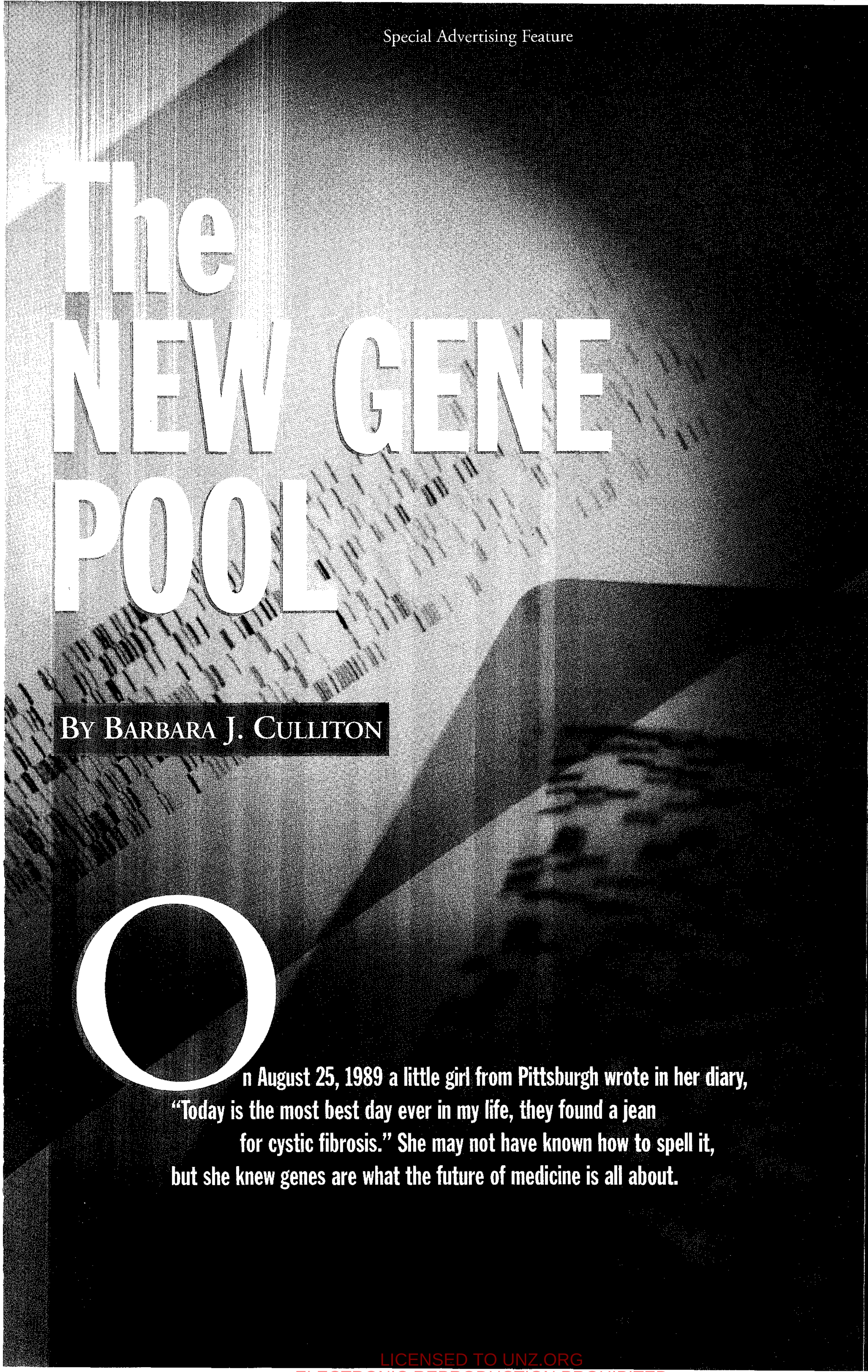
No writer who has gone to dinner at Epstein's apartment, in the old police building on Centre Street just north of Chinatown, waddles out quite the same. One is nearer-my-coronary-to-thee, it's true, but all the happier for it. Epstein's apprenticeship (like Jacques Chirac's) included a summer at a New England Howard Johnson's, where he fried clams. His skills have deepened annually. And his pantheon has widened. Epstein is loose with the "genius" epithet, and to him Julia Child and Alice Waters occupy seats in the empyrean no lower than Auden and Nabokov. There is no extra-literary experience quite like being served Epstein's latest enthusiasms (Icelandic lamb, fried potatoes, an unpronounceable Chinese green, and a chocolate soufflé) and long, serious talk through the night. This is called a full meal, and it's a mystery where else in the city it may be served.

Epstein is among the last of the (truly uppercase) New York Intellectuals, but that is twice-told. He is also, in a city of salesmen, one of its keenest. He is a culture entrepreneur, but one who does not cheapen the culture. To the contrary: In 1953, when he was a tot of twenty-four, he started the trend of the "quality paperback" in this country, with Anchor Books. With an assist from Wilson and McGeorge Bundy, he launched the Library of America—that great black-jacketed procession, the American Pléiade. During a prolonged newspaper strike, in 1963, he, Elizabeth Hardwick, Barbara Epstein, and Robert Lowell dreamed up *The New York Review of Books*. In 1988, he dreamed up the Reader's Catalog, which persists most vividly as the hard-copy precursor to on-line bookselling. Sometimes Epstein's ideas are fleeting (not long ago, there was a scheme for a sink-side computerized cookbook), but then one comes along and sticks, and changes things.

As an editor, Epstein is not of the touchy-feely, oh-how-wonderful school. He can be famously grumpy (and occasionally terrifying). Publishing apocrypha has it that his relationship with one author diminished somewhat when the writer phoned him *in media re culinaria*. The writer was calling for some advice, some telephonic hand-holding, but he sensed a certain Epsteinian impatience.

"I can't now!" Epstein (may or may not have) remarked. "I'm making a mayonnaise!"

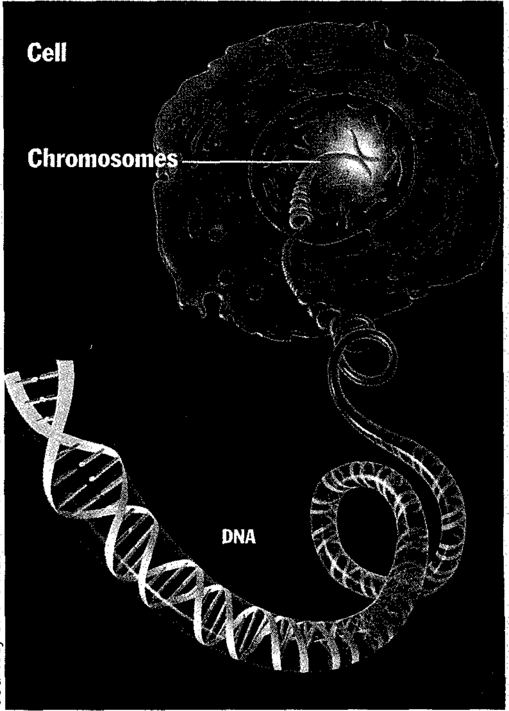
In a span just shy of a half century, scores of writers have learned to wait their turn. The advice, the editing, the kindnesses are well worth it. So is the mayonnaise. —DAVID REMNICK



The NEW GENE POOL

By Barbara J. Culliton

On August 25, 1989 a little girl from Pittsburgh wrote in her diary, "Today is the most best day ever in my life, they found a jean for cystic fibrosis." She may not have known how to spell it, but she knew genes are what the future of medicine is all about.



Courtesy of the National Human Genome Research Institute

Unraveling the cell's nucleus: Chromosomes contain thousands of genes. Each gene is a series of rungs on the ladder of the DNA double helix.

A drop or two of blood, analyzed by a DNA decoder, will soon yield a genetic profile for every man, woman, and child who goes to the doctor for a routine physical. Our genes will be an open book, revealing good news (you don't carry a gene for breast cancer) and bad news (you have a gene that predisposes you to heart disease). One tiny glitch in a gene is sometimes all it takes to cause disease. But if the promise of genetic medicine is fully realized, even bad news will be helpful because physicians will be able to replace defective genes with healthy ones or treat people with a diet or drugs that will keep "bad genes" in check.

Scientists are still not sure how many genes we have (80,000 are estimated, give or take 10,000) but they do know that genes are made up of chemical sequences that, when strung together in a certain order, form genetic words that have meaning. Unsung titans of science have labored to learn the meaning of these chemical "words" as they untangle the complicated connections between genes, health, and disease.

With the advent of so-called recombinant DNA technology or genetic engineering in the 1970s, the tools needed to probe into the structure and function of genes have become available. We've learned that genes, sequenced along lengthy strands of DNA, make proteins in their own image. Proteins are the structure that carries out the necessary function of the cell. If our genes are "good" and the proteins faithfully carry out their missions, our bodies can remain free of disease. In the normal course of events, human DNA is busy replicating itself to make new cells. But the complex, double helical structure of DNA is fertile ground for the kind of "typographical errors" that produce mutations.

So far, scientists have identified about 770 genes that cause specific human diseases—up from less than a dozen only ten years ago. And the number is going up every week. We know that there are genes that can cause disease directly, as in sickle cell anemia or cystic fibrosis. "Susceptibility" genes predispose persons to illness if they are exposed to specific environmental toxins or other factors that cause genes to malfunction. And there are genes that can be used to understand and treat disease through gene therapy or drugs. Like the Rosetta stone, the language of genes is beginning to make sense. The diagnosis and treatment of human disease promises to be far more successful than we could have imagined even a decade ago.

Cystic Fibrosis "Jeans"

Francis S. Collins, M.D. likes to tell the story of an eight-year-old patient who misspelled genes but knew how important they are. "Give us a few more years and I believe her vision will come true," says Collins. "I'm happy to say that she is doing well at age seventeen."

Taught at home by his mother virtually until he went to high school, Collins was accepted at the University of Virginia at age sixteen. An ebullient personality, he rides a Honda Nighthawk 750 motorcycle and at one time added a fresh decal to his helmet every time someone in his lab discovered a new gene for human disease.

Collins was head of a genetics research group at the University of Michigan Medical School in Ann Arbor when he and his collaborators at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto won the race among scientists to find the cystic fibrosis gene. The amino acid phenylalanine should be located at a certain position (#508) in the protein coded by the CF gene, but due to the equivalent of a "typographical error" the crucial phenylalanine has been deleted. As a result, chloride that is supposed to make its way to the outside surface of cells gets stuck inside, and thick, sticky sheets of mucous build up to block the smaller airways in a CF patient's lungs, leading to serious bacterial infections.

For years, physicians used antibiotics to combat these deadly infections. But, because CF patients have innate defects in their defense mechanisms and because bacteria eventually become resistant to antibiotics, the battle was often lost. Now, research is aimed at the underlying genetic defect in chloride metabolism. One hope is that gene therapy can replace the defective CF gene with a normal one and another is to find ways to make the defective protein more functional.

Passionately committed to the future of genetic medicine, Collins left his professorship at the University of Michigan to head the National Human Genome Research Institute.

Like the Rosetta stone, the language of genes is beginning to make sense.

Cover: Patterns of DNA sequences form "genetic fingerprints" unique to each individual. Photo from TEK Image/Science Photo Library-Photo Researchers, Inc.
Section logo: Image of color-stained chromosomes taken with an Olympus AX-70 microscope and magnified 1,700 times. Courtesy of Olympus America, Inc.

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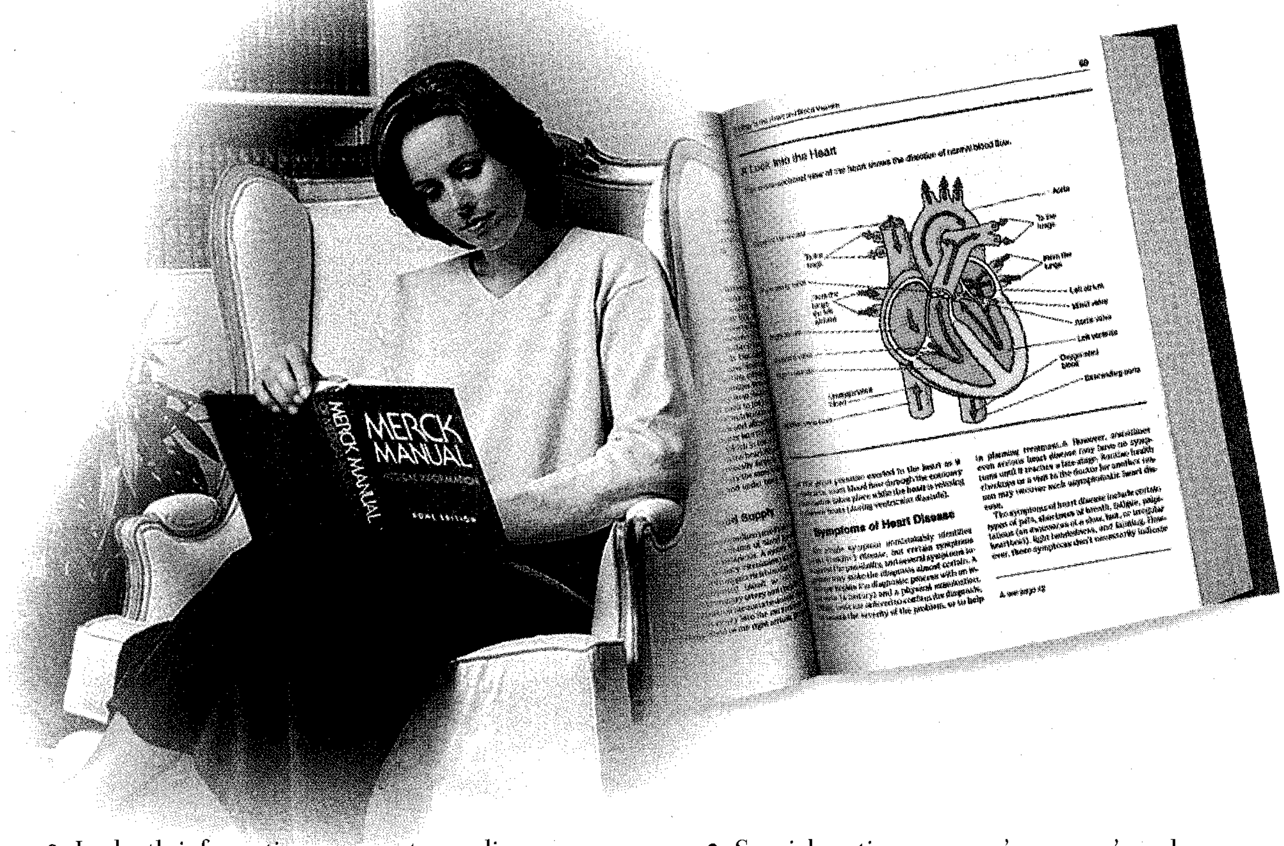

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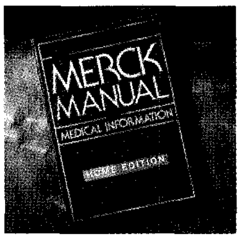

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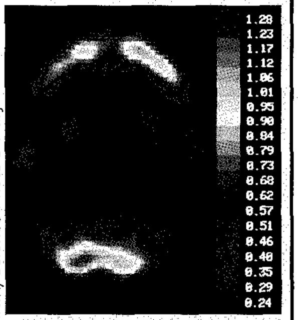
"Gene Therapy" for High Blood Pressure

More than fifty million men and women in America have high blood pressure or hypertension, but many of them don't know it. About 200,000 of them die each year of complications related to their condition. Despite its prevalence, the causes of hypertension remain something of a medical mystery. Richard P. Lifton, M.D., of the Yale University School of Medicine in New Haven, is researching genes that control rare forms of hypertension (high blood pressure) and hypotension (low blood pressure). He hopes that by studying the genes of people who have uncommon forms of this very common disease, he will uncover information that will make the treatment of common blood pressure disorders more effective.

According to Lifton—whose laid-back style and keen sense of humor make him popular with his students—there are about seventy different blood pressure drugs on the market, each acting in subtly different ways. Which one a doctor prescribes is at first "often just a guess," or, he says, "a choice made empirically." If the drug succeeds in lowering the patient's blood pressure, the doctor will continue to prescribe it. Otherwise, he will try a different drug. Lifton's goal is to develop a pharmacology that is tailored to specific genetic deficiencies. As more genes are identified, physicians will be able to develop a genetic profile for each patient that will one day eliminate any guesswork.

"We have found mutations in three genes that can cause severe forms of high blood pressure, and mutations in eight genes that can cause severe forms of low blood pressure," says Lifton. The most interesting finding is that "all of these mutations act on a single, final, common pathway—one that controls how the kidney handles salt." For instance, there are specific inherited forms of hypertension that don't respond well to conventional therapy but do respond to amiloride, a drug that reduces the kidney's ability to retain salt. For patients with another rare form of hypertension, Lifton prescribes cortisol, which specifically turns off the mutated gene. He calls the latter "pharmacological gene therapy"—using a drug right off the shelf to correct a genetic error.

Lifton hopes to identify genes that account for common forms of blood pressure disorders. His discovery of genes for rare forms of high and low blood pressure has already provided targets for the development of novel drugs that may have wider use (and fewer side effects) in the general hypertensive population.



NIH/Science Photo Library

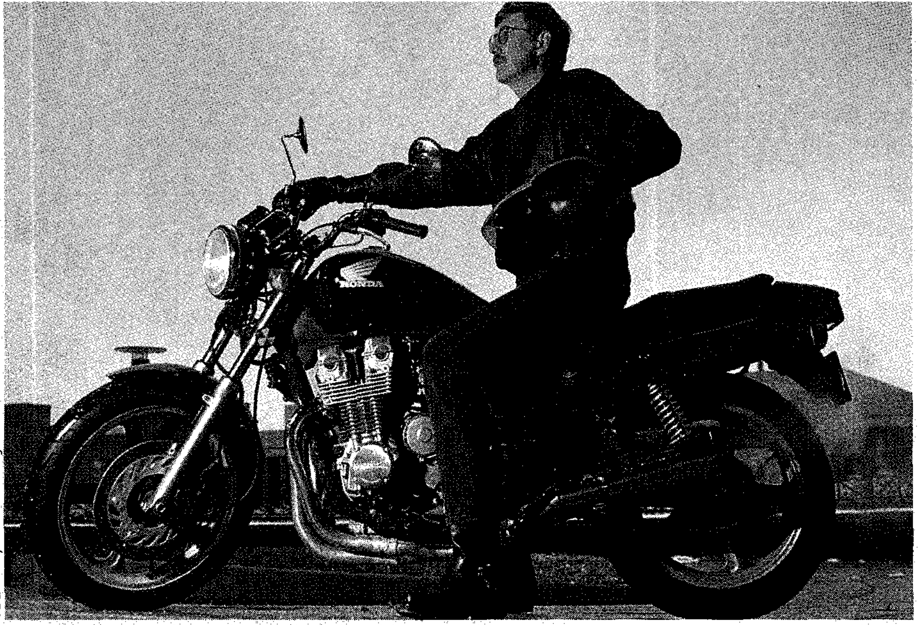
Brain scan of a 75-year-old patient suffering from Alzheimer's for four to five years. (Dark areas indicate virtually no brain activity.)

Alzheimer's: A New Theory for Old Neurons

For many years, cancer was the most feared disease in America, but research based on molecular genetics has led to real progress in oncology. Now, as the population ages, Alzheimer's disease—which cannot be treated very successfully, let alone cured—ranks among the most dreaded of human afflictions.

Allen D. Roses, M.D., who for years was the director of the Alzheimer's Disease Research Center at Duke University School of Medicine in Durham, NC, recently became the director of genetic research and development at pharmaceutical firm Glaxo Wellcome. He explains that at autopsy the brains of Alzheimer's patients are filled with senile plaques containing, among other proteins, one called beta-amyloid. The brain's nerve cells are also riddled with tangled filaments made by a protein called tau.

"Life as a scientist means balancing the part of you that gets very excited with each new discovery with



Ted Thai/Time Life Syndication

Trailblazer Francis Collins spearheads the mission to locate and map the estimated 80,000 human genes by 2005.

Roses is outspoken in his belief that these suspect proteins are not the cause of Alzheimer's but merely its markers or "tombstones" that the disease leaves behind. "The right question," he says, "is how do genes make brain cells sick?"

"Location is everything," insists Roses, whose current focus is on the location of APOE proteins inside of brain neurons. "We need to know what the APOE metabolism inside neurons is all about. How do its products interact with other gene products? What's it doing in there?" Everybody has two APOE genes—one from each parent. An APOE gene codes for three different APOE proteins, each of which is associated with a different onset of Alzheimer's. Because there are three types of proteins, they combine differently in people depending on their genetic heritage. Those who test positive for one combination are likely to show signs of dementia in their seventies or earlier, while those with a different combination are likely to be mentally healthy well into their mid-eighties and beyond.

"Neurons are designed to live more than a hundred years with highly efficient glucose and oxygen metabolism," explains Roses. Alzheimer's occurs when neurons age prematurely. "The name of the game for the next decade is to discover the metabolic processes that affect the timing of the onset of Alzheimer's," he says. Roses is betting that the APOE metabolism is fertile ground for new drugs to keep Alzheimer's at bay. If he cannot cure it outright, his goal is to slow its progression, which might amount to the same thing.

the sober part that knows there are hurdles ahead."

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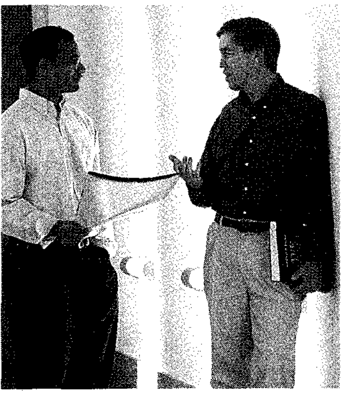

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***Top:* Geneticist Bert Vogelstein discovered five genes responsible for colorectal cancer, one of the most commonly inherited diseases in America.**

***Bottom:* Richard Lifton's goal is to identify genes for common forms of hypertension. Shown here *(right)* in a Yale University hallway with one of his students.**

A "Two-hit" Hypothesis

Although the idea that someone carries a gene that predisposes them to cancer sounds simple enough, one of the great conundrums of cancer genetics is: What does this notion of susceptibility actually mean? In the early 1970s, Alfred G. Knudson, Jr., M.D., at the Fox Chase Cancer Center in Philadelphia, was studying retinoblastoma, a childhood cancer of the eye, when he came up with the so-called "two-hit" hypothesis for cancer. Children who inherit a nonfunctional copy of the retinoblastoma gene (hit one) are susceptible to cancer, but they develop it only if the second "good" copy of their retinoblastoma gene sustains some kind of damage (hit two). An environmental toxin, radiation, some dietary factor, or even an assault from within the body might trigger malignancy when their good copy of the gene is damaged.

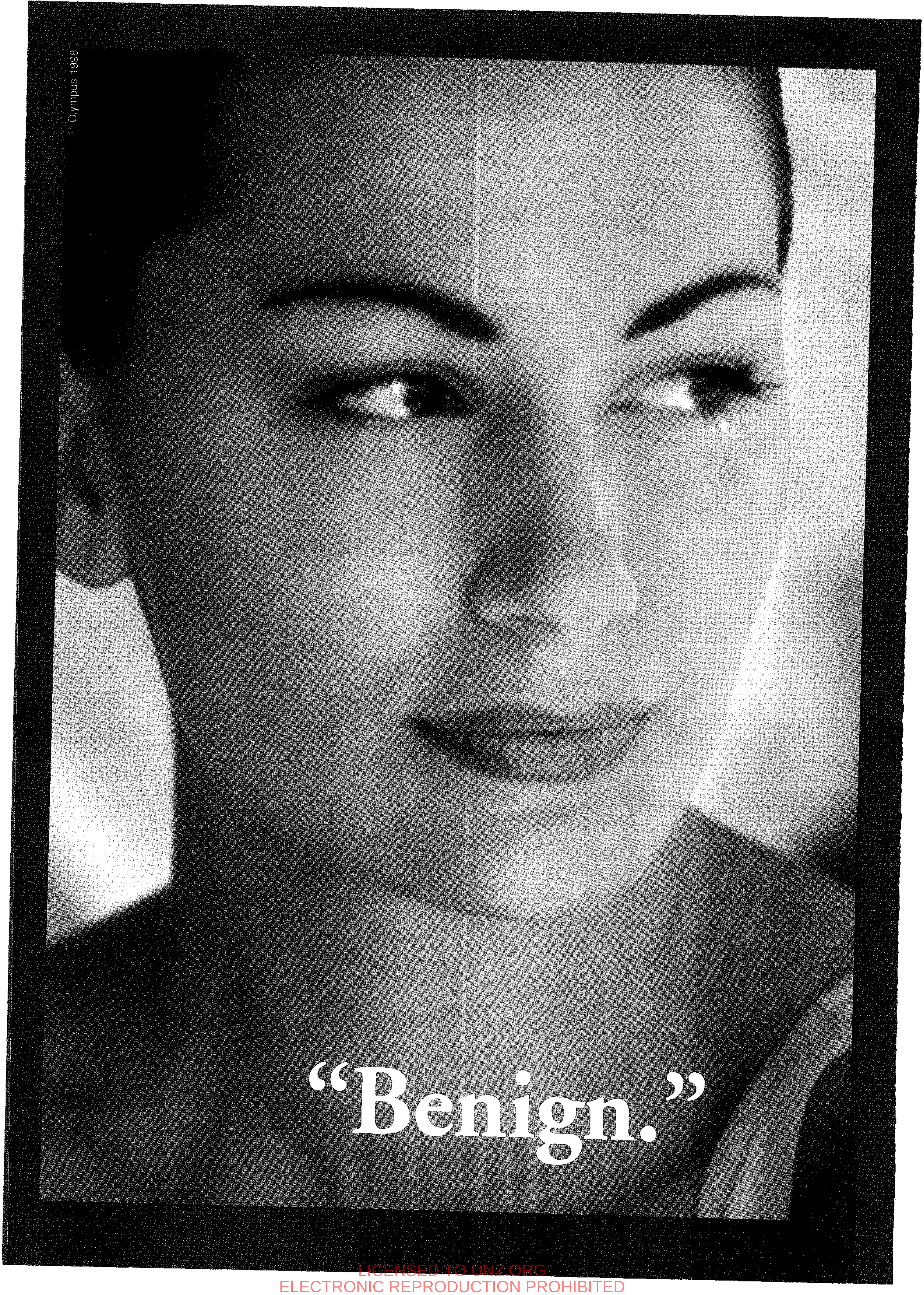
When Knudson presented his "two-hit" theory at a Jackson Laboratory scientific conference in Bar Harbor, Maine in 1976, not everyone in the audience was persuaded. But he held fast to his hypothesis and his persistence paid off a decade later when his theory received direct support with the cloning of the retinoblastoma gene. Extending his "two-hit" hypothesis beyond his study of susceptibility in young children, Knudson proposed that many types of adult cancer occur when two essential genes sustain a similar pattern of being hit twice.

Curtailing Colon Cancer

Bert Vogelstein, M.D. entered cancer research with a vengeance after one of his first patients, a five-year-old girl, died of leukemia. He experienced enormous frustration over his inability to explain why she had the disease. Vogelstein's subsequent work was partially guided by Knudson's "two-hit" hypothesis.

In the past few years Vogelstein's papers on cancer genetics have been referred to and used more often than those of any biomedical scientist. A professor at the Johns Hopkins Oncology Center in Baltimore, he discovered a genetic defect that stimulates the growth of polyps that, if they are not detected early and removed, will almost surely progress to colon cancer.

Vogelstein made the insightful observation that nearly all colon cancer cells contain a mutated form of a gene called p53. He and his colleagues (whom he credits with doing all of the arduous laboratory work) realized that mutated p53 was the equivalent of a second "hit." The gene, whose normal function is to regulate the growth of cells, allows cell growth to run rampant when it has become defective. This "initiated a revolution in p53 research," says Vogelstein, and shed light on what may be one of the principal genetic errors in many forms of cancer. Now, researchers at major medical centers are attempting to test surgically removed tumors for mutated p53 as a way to help make decisions about a patient's therapy and to predict whether or not the tumor is likely to recur.


“Benign.”
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Precisely.

Each specimen we look at has someone's life written on it.

The clock has no hands and the pain of waiting is excruciating. And the suffering of asking "why me?" is unimaginable, understandable, unbearable.

As you come face to face with the inexorable and overwhelming possibility of a tumor, the "what ifs" are paramount. What if it's a precancerous in situ lesion? What if it's an invasive carcinoma? What if it's metastic? If it spreads? If my body doesn't bear my name and my grace anymore? If my husband can't look? If I can't have children? If I'm rejected? If I'm damaged? If I'm not me?

There are insistencies you need to insist on. Without excuses, without pretense, without fail. Have a mammogram every year, without fail. Have a PAP smear every year, without avoidance. And a sigmoidoscopy with a stool guaiac, no cop-outs. Your husband, a PSA test, no alibis. And please, visit your doctor, today. There are new therapies, new drugs, new breakthroughs that turn hopes into realities.

Reach out for advice and knowledge. The American Cancer Society's web site is www.cancer.org; the National Alliance of Breast Cancer Organization's is www.nabco.org; Susan G. Comen Cancer Foundation is www.breastcancerinfo.com and 2 Chicks, 2 Bikes, 1 Cause is www.2chicks.org.

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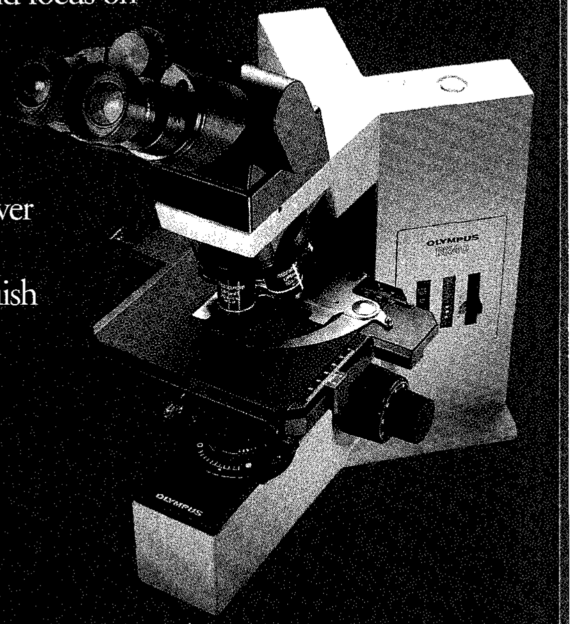

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Far from the stereotype of a conservative scientist, Vogelstein plays keyboards in a rock band called Wild Type. Comprised of his lab colleagues at Hopkins, the band is named for the good form of the p53 gene—the natural or "wild" form that keeps tumors from growing.

Just last year, the Hopkins lab discovered a variant in a colon cancer gene that was likened to the difference between the American and British spellings of "color" and "colour." "We always assumed such variants were harmless," Vogelstein says, "but now we have to rethink things." Known in genetic circles as "I1307K," this variant does not cause colon cancer directly; rather, it makes the gene in which it resides unstable and especially susceptible to subsequent damage.

The variant is most likely to exist in Eastern European or Ashkenazi Jews, a group that includes Vogelstein himself. "If you belong to this population, you can take active steps to protect yourself," says Vogelstein. Those who test positive for the variant can have regular colon exams. If benign polyps are surgically removed before they become cancerous, the disease can almost certainly be prevented.

The Mutated *Ras* Gene

The years between a discovery in the laboratory and practical therapy can seem endless. But when ideas finally all come together, the arrival of a promising new treatment seems like a wonderful surprise. In the late 1970s, Edward M. Scolnick, M.D. was a young scientist at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) when he discovered a gene in rats that causes cancer. As Scolnick recalls, "I was home in Maryland on a Sunday morning reading an old historical textbook on tumor viruses when I had the first 'aha' moment. Suddenly I knew what experiment we should do. And we soon found a tumor virus in rats that eventually turned out to be very important for understanding the causes of human cancers." Scolnick found that a defect called *ras* (for rat sarcoma) incites the growth of tumor cells. Because of a lone genetic error, *ras* is unable to act as a brakeman controlling unbridled cell growth. Instead, the gene instructs cells to proliferate wildly into the jumble that is a tumor. This heralded a major breakthrough in cancer research. Yet, the discovery was only in rats.

In 1982, Robert A. Weinberg, a professor of biology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a member of the Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research, discovered a mutated form of the *ras* gene in human cancer cells. Armed with a bottle of champagne in a Styrofoam cooler, Weinberg flew to Scolnick's lab to celebrate the leap from rodents to people. Scientists in other laboratories and at medical schools joined the hunt. The mutated *ras* was found in a variety of human tumors, including cancer of the lung, colon, pancreas, and prostate.

Funding First: Building On a Legacy

The research of cutting-edge biomedical scientists, such as those featured in "The New Gene Pool," must become a national priority in the twenty-first century. Fundamental breakthroughs in curing human disease will only come if scientists are afforded ample opportunity to pursue their vital research.

A tireless advocate who devoted more than fifty years to building federal awareness and commitment to biomedical research, Mary Woodward Lasker was driven by her belief that basic research would lead to cures for dreaded human diseases.

To reward scientific achievement in basic and clinical research, she established the Albert Lasker Medical Research Awards in 1945, in honor of her husband. The Lasker award has been called "America's Nobel," because nearly half of the Lasker basic research winners have gone on to garner Nobel Prizes.

Funding First is a newly created program of the Lasker Charitable Trust. Its goal is to continue the nation's commitment to funding biomedical research. Health scientists deserve enduring support for primary research, whether sponsored by government, industry, academia, or other not-for-profit organizations. Former Senator Mark O. Hatfield and Dr. Leon Rosenberg, two nationally recognized leaders, have lent their full support to the advocacy and education initiatives of Funding First.

For more information about Funding First or the Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation, visit their respective websites at www.fundingfirst.org and www.laskerfoundation.com.

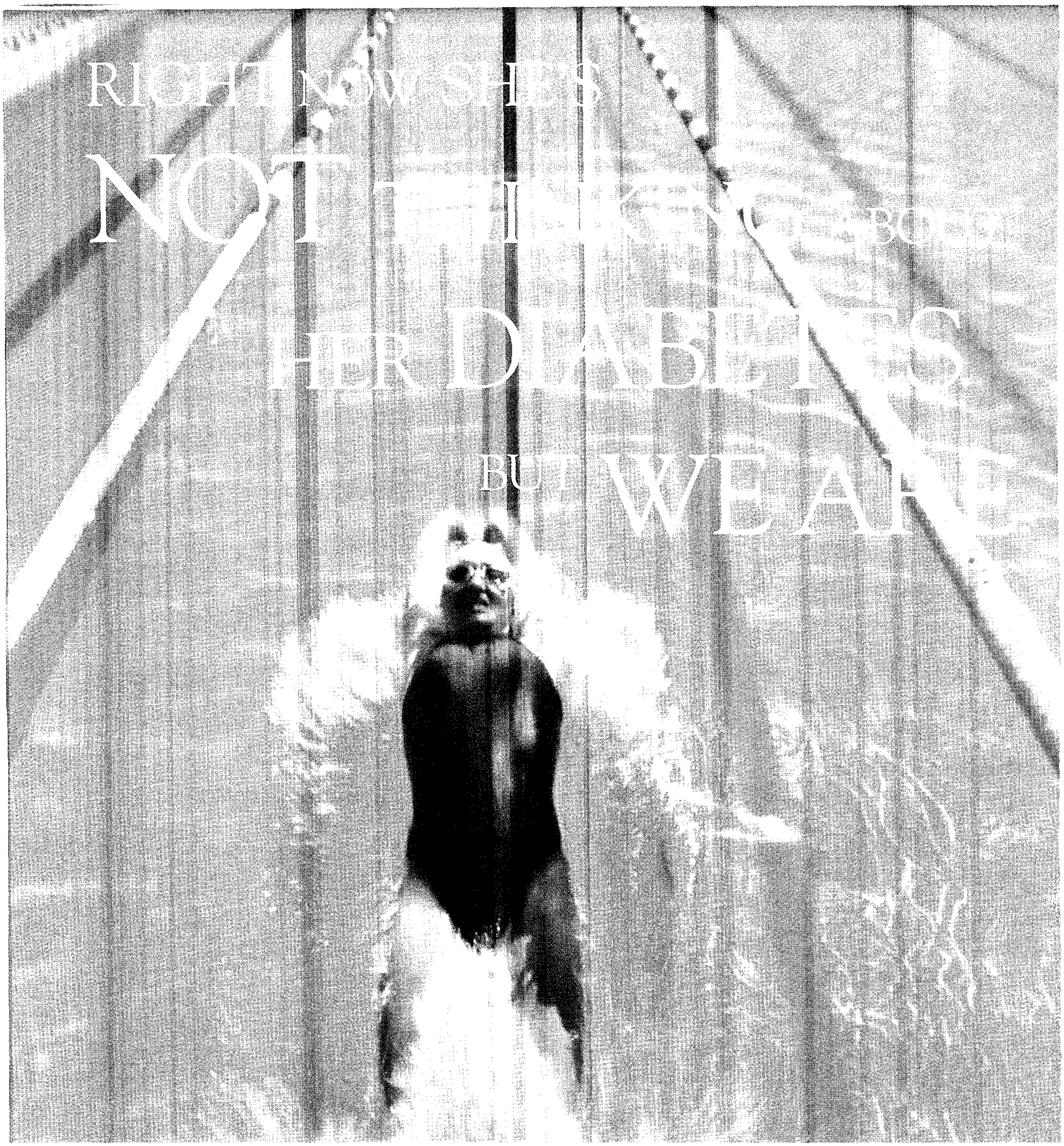
The payoff is that cancer drugs to combat *ras* are tantalizingly near at hand. Scolnick moved to Merck Research Laboratories where he is now president and head of research. He is developing an experimental agent that has anti-tumor effects in mice and is in the very early stages of testing in humans. At Bristol-Myers Squibb, researchers are also initiating human clinical trials of their version of an anti-*ras* drug that has also proved to be powerful against cancer in mice. "But," cautions Robert Kramer, Ph.D., vice president of the company's Oncology Drug Discovery department, "life as a scientist means balancing the part of you that gets very excited with each new discovery with the sober part that knows there are hurdles ahead."

HGP Shoots for the Moon

The Human Genome Project will be for medicine in the twenty-first century what the NASA moon shot was for the exploration of space. Its goal is nothing less than to decipher all of the genetic information encoded in the 80,000 or so genes on our forty-six chromosomes.

The best guess is that there are some three billion chemical "letters," written in almost infinite combination, like the zeroes and ones of computer software. Together, they comprise a vast database of genetic information that, when deciphered, will make it easier to locate disease genes. The search for a particular gene (like the one for CF) used to take an entire decade. "Such a slow, painful process would be impossible for locating large numbers of disease genes," says Francis Collins, director of the NIH's National Human Genome Research Institute. But new gene-reading technology has made the search vastly easier. And with it, the promise of genetic medicine is now tangible.

(Washington-based writer, Barbara J. Culliton, is the editor-in-chief of the Journal of Investigative Medicine *and teaches in The Writing Seminars program at Johns Hopkins.)*



Diabetes is the sixth leading cause of death in the U.S. It's a disease that causes diseases: heart attack, stroke, loss of limbs, blindness, and kidney failure. Today, pharmaceutical company researchers have discovered new medicines that help manage diabetes for the 15 million people who have it. So there are fewer and fewer cases of the diseases that come with diabetes. These medicines allow people with diabetes to lead more normal lives. Now, the challenge for researchers is to discover a cure. And we won't stop thinking about a cure until we find it.

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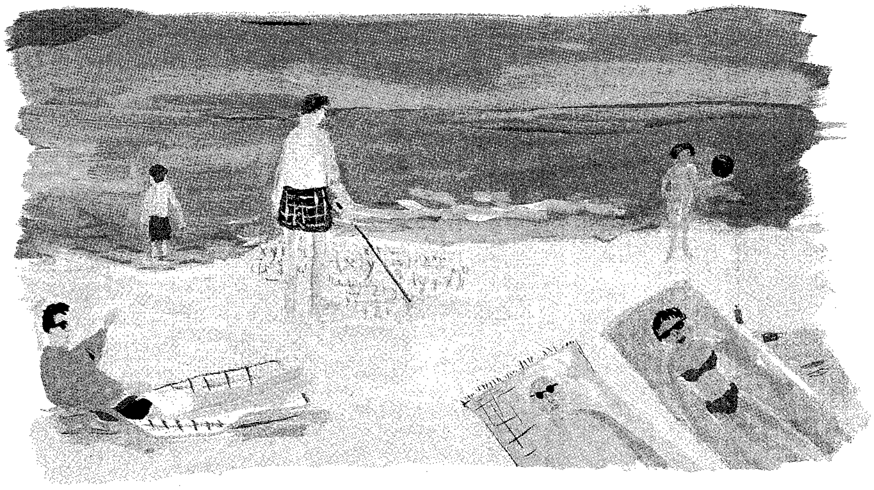
CASUAL

FAMILY ENGINEERING

All the day-to-day activities of childhood were fun—until Dad got involved.

BY DAVID SEDARIS

MY father always struck me as the sort of man who, under the right circumstances, might have invented the microwave oven or the transistor radio. You wouldn't seek him out for advice on a personal problem, but he'd be the first one you'd call when the dishwasher broke or someone flushed a hairpiece down your toilet. As children, we placed a great deal of faith in his ability, but learned to steer clear while he was working. The experience of watching was ruined, time and time again, by an interminable explanation of how things were put together. Faced with an exciting question, science tended to provide the dullest possible answer. Ions might charge the air, but they fell flat when it came to charging the imagination—my imagination, anyway. To this day, I prefer to believe that inside every television there lives a community of versatile, thumb-size actors, trained to portray everything from a thoughtful newscaster to the wife of a millionaire stranded on a desert island. Fickle gnomes control the weather, and an air-conditioner is powered by a team of squirrels, their cheeks packed with ice cubes.

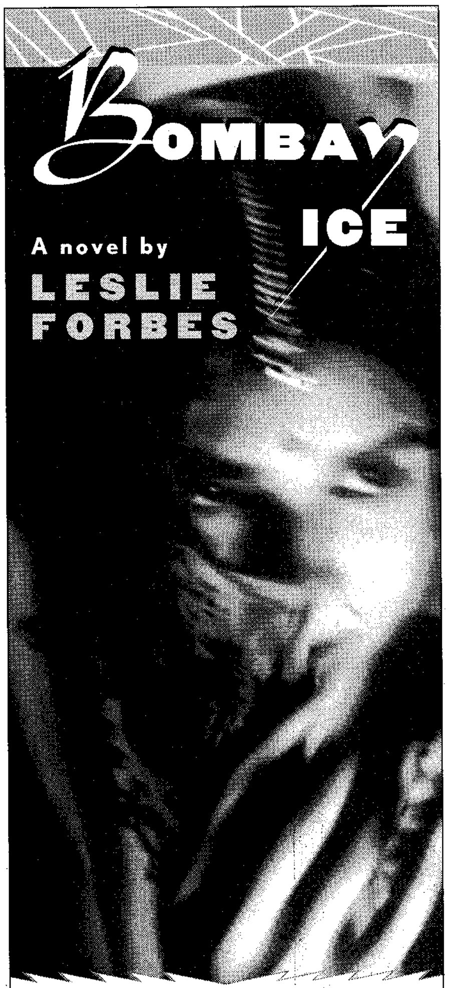


While we tanned on the beach, he drew equations in the sand.

MAIRA KALMAN

Once, while rifling through the toolshed, I came across a poster advertising an I.B.M. computer the size of a refrigerator. Sitting at the control board was my dad the engineer, years younger, examining a printout no larger than a grocery receipt. When I asked about it, he explained that he had worked with a team devising a memory chip capable of storing up to fifteen pages' worth of information. Out came the notepad and pencil, and I was trapped for hours as he answered every question except the one I had asked: "Were you allowed to wear makeup and run through a variety of different poses, or did they get the picture on the first take?"

To me, the greatest mystery of science continues to be that a man could father six children who shared absolutely none of his interests. We certainly expressed enthusiasm for our mother's hobbies, from smoking and napping to the writings of Sidney Sheldon. (Ask my mother how the radio worked and her answer was simple: "Turn it on and pull out the goddam antenna.") I once visited my father's office, and walked away comforted to find that at least there he had a few people he could talk to. We'd gone, my sister Amy and I, to settle a bet. She thought that my father's secretary had a sharp, protruding chin and long blond hair, while I imagined that the woman might more closely re-



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The New York Times

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AMNIO TO GENOME

Research on genetic diseases – notably many diseases of childhood – is entering an exciting, promising new phase. As scientists intensify the process of deciphering the secrets of the human genetic blueprint, their findings yield critical new clues to the development of genetic diseases and to the search for new therapies. ❧ The figures are staggering: deciphering the blueprint means the ultimate sequencing of 3,000,000,000 letters of the human genetic code. Genetic diseases number about 5,000. ❧ The Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot, Israel, takes pride in its commitment to both these research challenges. Years ago, discoveries in a Weizmann laboratory led to the first uses of amniocentesis to examine the fetus and diagnose hereditary illnesses. Among current projects on the Weizmann agenda are studies of fundamental embryonic development, Down syndrome, low birth weight, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, insulin substitutes and vaccinations against juvenile diabetes. The establishment of the Bioinformatics Genome Research Center on the Weizmann campus underscores the growing contributions of Institute scientists to the World Human Genome Project. ❧ It's another example of how support for basic scientific research yields practical benefits previously beyond reach.

The Weizmann Institute, founded in 1934, is a community of 2,400 scientists, engineers and scientists-in-training engaged in a full agenda of 1,000 research projects ranging from basic medical research in cancer, AIDS, neurosciences and children's diseases to chemistry, physics, agriculture, computer science and the environment.

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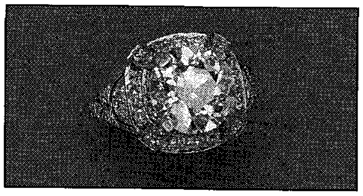

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semble a tortoise—chinless, with a beaky nose and a loose, sagging neck. The correct answer was somewhere in between. I was right about the nose and the neck, but Amy won on the chin and the hair color. The bet had been the sole reason for our visit, and the resulting insufferable tour of Buildings A through D taught us never again to express an interest in our father's workplace.

My own scientific curiosity eventually blossomed, but I knew enough to keep my freakish experiments to myself. When my father discovered my colony of frozen slugs in the basement freezer, I chose not to explain my complex theories of suspended animation. Why was I filling the hamster's water bottle with vodka? "Oh, no reason." If my experiment failed, and the drunken hamster passed out, I'd just put her in the deep freeze, alongside the slugs. She'd rest on ice for a few months and, once thawed and fully revived, would remember nothing of her previous life as an alcoholic. I also took to repairing my own record-player, and was astonished by my ingenuity for up to ten minutes at a time—until the rubber band snapped, or the handful of change came unglued from the arm, and the damned thing broke all over again.

DURING the first week of September, it was my family's habit to rent a beach house on Ocean Isle, a thin strip of land off the coast of North Carolina. As youngsters, we participated in all the usual seaside activities—which were fun, until my father got involved and systematically chipped away at our pleasure. Miniature golf was ruined with a lengthy dissertation on impact, trajectory, and wind velocity, and our sandcastles were critiqued with stifling lectures on the dynamics of the vaulted ceiling. We enjoyed swimming until the mystery of tides was explained in such a way that the ocean seemed nothing more than an enormous saltwater toilet, flushing itself on a sad and predictable basis.

By the time we reached our teens, we were exhausted. No longer interested in the water, we joined our mother on the beach blanket and dedicated ourselves to the higher art of tanning. Under her guidance, we learned which lotions to start off with, and what worked best for various weather conditions and times of day. She taught us that the combination of false confidence and Hawaiian Tro

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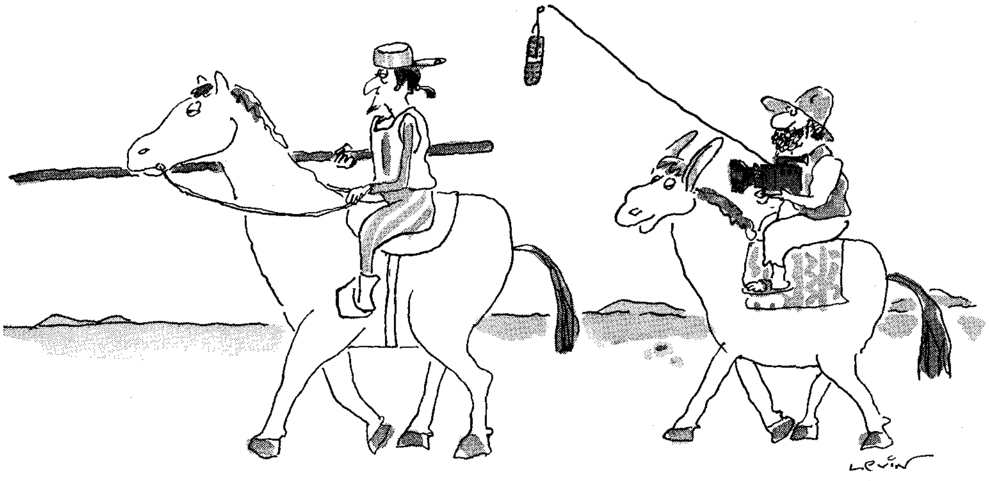


could result in a painful and unsightly burn, certain to subtract valuable points when, on the final night of vacation, contestants gathered for the annual Miss Emollient Pageant. This was a contest judged by our mother, in which the holder of the darkest tan was awarded a crown, a sash, and a sceptre.

Technically, the prize could go to either a male or a female, but the sash read "Miss Emollient" because it was always assumed that my sister Gretchen would once again sweep the title. For her, tanning had moved from an intense hobby to something more closely resembling a psychological dysfunction. She was what we called a tanorexic: someone who simply could not get enough. Year after year, she arrived at the beach with a basecoat that the rest of us could only dream of achieving as our final product. With a mixture of awe and envy, we watched her broiling away on her aluminum blanket. The spaces between her toes were tanned, as were her palms, and even the backs of her ears. Her method involved baby oil and a series of poses that tended to draw crowds, the mothers shielding their children's eyes with sand-covered fingers.

It is difficult for me to sit still for more than twenty minutes at a stretch, so I used to interrupt my tanning sessions with walks to the pier. On one of those walks, I came across my father standing not far from a group of fishermen, who were untangling knots in a net the size of a circus tent. A lifetime of work beneath the coastal sun had left them with what my sisters and I referred to as the Samsonite Syndrome, meaning that their enviable color was negated by a hard, leathery texture reminiscent of the suitcase my mother stored all our baby pictures in. The men drank from quart bottles of Mountain Dew as they paused from their work to regard my father, who stood at the water's edge, staring at the shoreline with a stick in his hand.

I tried to creep by unnoticed, but he stopped me, claiming that I was just the fellow he'd been looking for. "Do you have any idea how many grains of sand there are in the world?" he asked. It was a question that had never occurred to me. Unlike guessing the number of pickled eggs in a jar, or the amount of human brains it might take to equal the weight of a portable television set, this equation was bound to involve the hateful word "googolplex," a term I'd heard him use once or twice before. It was an *idea* of a number and was, therefore, of no use whatsoever.

I'd heard once in school that if a single bird were to transport all the sand, grain by grain, from the Eastern Seaboard to the west coast of Africa, it would take . . . I didn't catch the number of years, preferring to concentrate on the single bird chosen to perform this thankless task. It hardly seemed fair, because, unlike a horse or a seeing-eye dog, the whole glory of being a bird is that nobody would ever put you to work. Birds search for grubs and build their nests, but their leisure time is theirs to spend as they see fit. I pictured this bird looking down from the branches to say "You want me to do what?" before flying off, laughing at the foolish story he now had to tell his friends. How many grains of sand are there in the world? A lot. Case closed.

My father took his stick and began writing an equation in the sand. Like all the rest of them, this one was busy with "x"s and "y"s resting on top of one another on dash-shaped bunks. Letters were multiplied by symbols, crowded into parentheses, and set upon by dwarfish numbers drawn at odd angles. The equation grew from six to twelve feet long before assuming a second line, at which point the fishermen took an interest. I watched them turn from their net, and admired the way they could smoke entire cigarettes without ever taking them from their mouths—a skill my mother had mastered, and one that continues to elude me. It involves a symbiotic relationship with the wind: you have to know exactly how and when to turn your head in order to keep the smoke out of your eyes.

One of the men asked my father if he was a tax accountant, and he answered, "No, an engineer." These were poor men, who could no longer afford to live by the ocean, who had long ago sold their one-story homes for the valuable sand beneath them. Their houses had been torn down to make room for high-priced hotels and the A-frame cottages that now rented in season for a thousand dollars a week.

"Let me ask a little something," one of the men said, spitting his spent cigarette butt into the surf. "If I got paid twelve thousand dollars in 1962 for a half-acre beachfront lot, how much would that be worth per grain of sand by today's standard?"

"That, my friend, is a very interesting question," my father said.

He moved several yards down the beach and began a new equation, captivating his audience with a lengthy explanation of each new and complex symbol. "When you say 'pie,'" one man asked, "do you mean a real live pie, or one of those pie shapes they put on the news sometimes to show how much of your money goes to taxes?"

My father answered their questions in detail, and they listened intently—this group of men with nets, blowing their smoke into the wind. Stooped and toothless, they hung upon his every word while I stood in the lazy surf, thinking of the upcoming pageant and wondering if the light reflecting off the water might tan the underside of my nose and chin. ♦

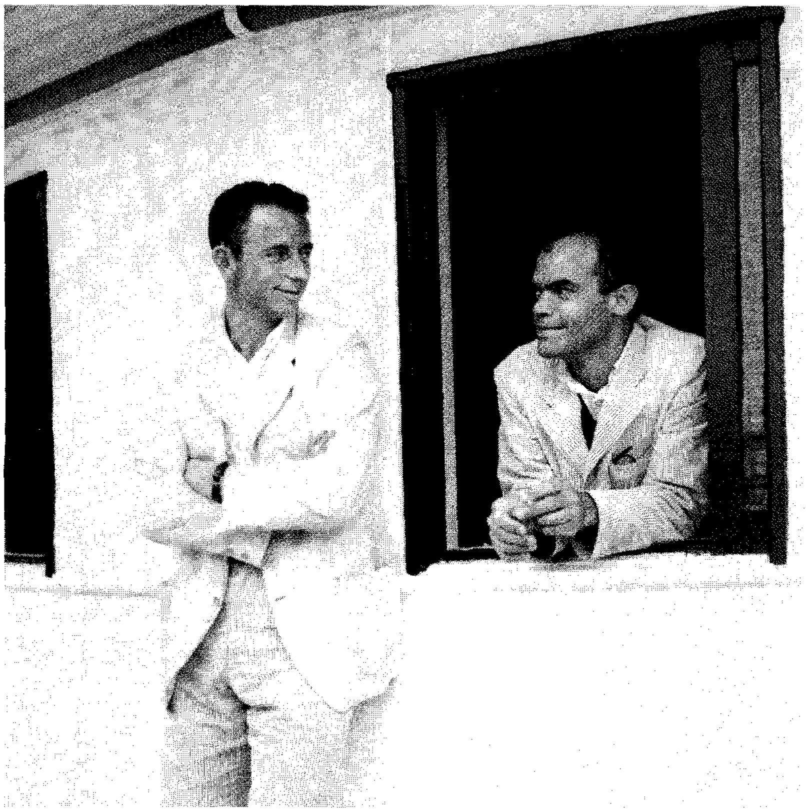
ANNALS OF DOMESTICITY

BUZZ AND ALAN

The true nature of their relationship dawned on the author gradually, the way family truths so often do.

BY MIMI SWARTZ

THE Greenwich Village apartment that my second cousin Alan Groh shared with his lover Buzz Miller could easily have been mistaken for a place inhabited by one person. Occupying the parlor floor of a Federal brownstone in the West Village, it was a relatively small space that always seemed much larger. Whenever I stopped by for a visit, they'd peer out from the open door as I rounded the stairs: two older men with secretive smiles and long, elegant vowels who greeted me with a kiss on the lips. The apartment had nine-foot windows overlooking a garden in the back, so that in daytime the rooms were perpetually flooded with soft, dusty light. It was a setting in which everyone always looked good.



Buzz and Alan couldn't see how coming out of the closet would be difficult. As Buzz once described gay life, "We thought it was better."

COURTESY BUZZ MILLER

So did the furniture, which had been selected more for its lines than for its pedigree. The back and front rooms were separated by weathered, floor-to-ceiling shutters wheedled out of a warehouse in Galveston. The Biedermeier-style dining-room chairs had been found on the street. It was a long time before I appreciated the painstakingly chosen art work arranged in a way that appeared casual; the whimsical decision to hang an autographed photograph of Marilyn Monroe in the bathroom ("To Buzz—I could watch you dancing forever").

In my younger days, I steered clear of the lower kitchen cabinets, the interiors of which were découpaged with photographs of homosexual activity, and of a nude shot, adjacent to the refrigerator, of Alan and Buzz at the water's edge at Fire Island, showing them as they were not long after they first met: a cigarette dangling from Alan's lips, the powerful curve of Buzz's right hip glistening with salt water. Today, the picture's colors have mellowed, as have the *Times* clippings that Alan and Buzz used for kitchen wallpaper when they moved in.

What the apartment conspicuously lacked was evidence of the sort of compromises that most people make when they cohabit: my stack by the side of the bed versus yours, my Marcel Breuer chairs versus your grandmother's fusty sofa. Alan and Buzz's apartment was at once seamless and mysterious—a small shrine to taste and timelessness. "The place is looking so beautiful," I said to Buzz while we were fixing supper one evening not long ago. He gave me a crooked grin. "It hasn't changed in thirty-five years," he said. The implication was clear: *I* was the one who was different.

ALAN and Buzz lived together for more than three decades—almost as long as my parents have been married. As a child growing up in Texas, I viewed them from afar with mild curiosity. I was aware that Alan was somehow involved in the art world and that Buzz danced on Broadway and in Hollywood musicals; I also sensed that they were together in a way that was irrefutable but, for various reasons, inexplicable. The true nature of their relationship dawned on me gradually, as I grew older, the way family truths so often do. But it was only several years ago, as business began bringing me more often to Manhattan, that I realized I had really known nothing about them; with the onset of old age and infirmity, they—like the New York they inhabited—were vanishing before my eyes, like guests leaving a party just as I was arriving.

One summer afternoon, I reached the apartment to find Buzz stooped over the stove, securing chunks of Gorgonzola from Balducci's to his mousetraps with strips of dental floss. "It was too easy for the mice to just carry the cheese away," he explained. Alan was out on the terrace, reading over a veterinarian's instructions for Miss Kuba, an ancient border-collie mix they had adopted many years before. "I've just read this first sentence, Buzz," Alan called into the kitchen, "and it seems to pertain to me as well." The vet wanted Miss Kuba on a "heart-healthy diet"—no red meat, no salt. It had never occurred to Alan and Buzz that Miss Kuba's daily diet of roast beef

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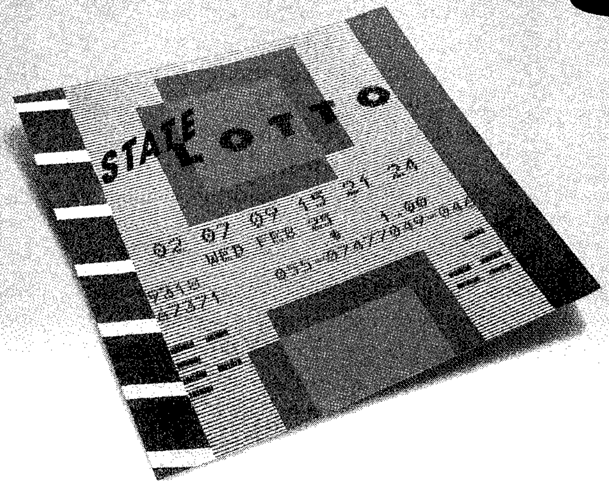

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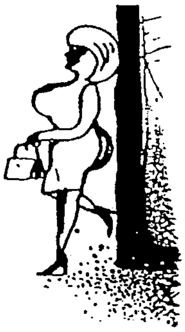
and gefilte fish (also from Balducci's) was anything but benign, any more than it had occurred to Alan to stop smoking after he survived a heart attack and a diagnosis of emphysema.

That afternoon, Buzz was wearing an oversized button-down shirt, open over a T-shirt and baggy slacks, and the hem of the shirt was swaying in time to his walk, which, even though he was seventy-two and limped because of dance-related injuries, remained rhythmic. He had on a Smith & Hawken cap with a long brim, which accentuated his beaklike nose. Behind his Armani glasses, black and round, his eyes could be either doleful or comic, depending on his mood. Alan was in a black T-shirt, and when he put his elbows on the table you could see the articulation of his triceps. His nose was broad, his lips were meaty, and his eyes were perpetually sly.

"Well," Alan would say whenever he began a story. Then, "*Well* . . . ," as if he were savoring that last moment when the story belonged to him and no one else. Alan was an aficionado of the story as a secret. To relatives, he unearthed family skeletons, and to friends he passed on intimate intelligence of former spouses or business partners. These stories were sometimes true, usually impossible to verify. From Alan—with Buzz providing additional color—I learned of supposed infidelities on the part of countless relatives, including a hapless cousin who had attempted to seduce my grandfather. It has since occurred to me that their attachment to these secrets was one of the things that kept them youthful; that, having come of age at a time when their sexual orientation had to be hidden, they turned their own sexual secret into a powerful, nurturing energy. The possibility that Alan and Buzz might one day grow old had—until very recently—seemed to me unthinkable.



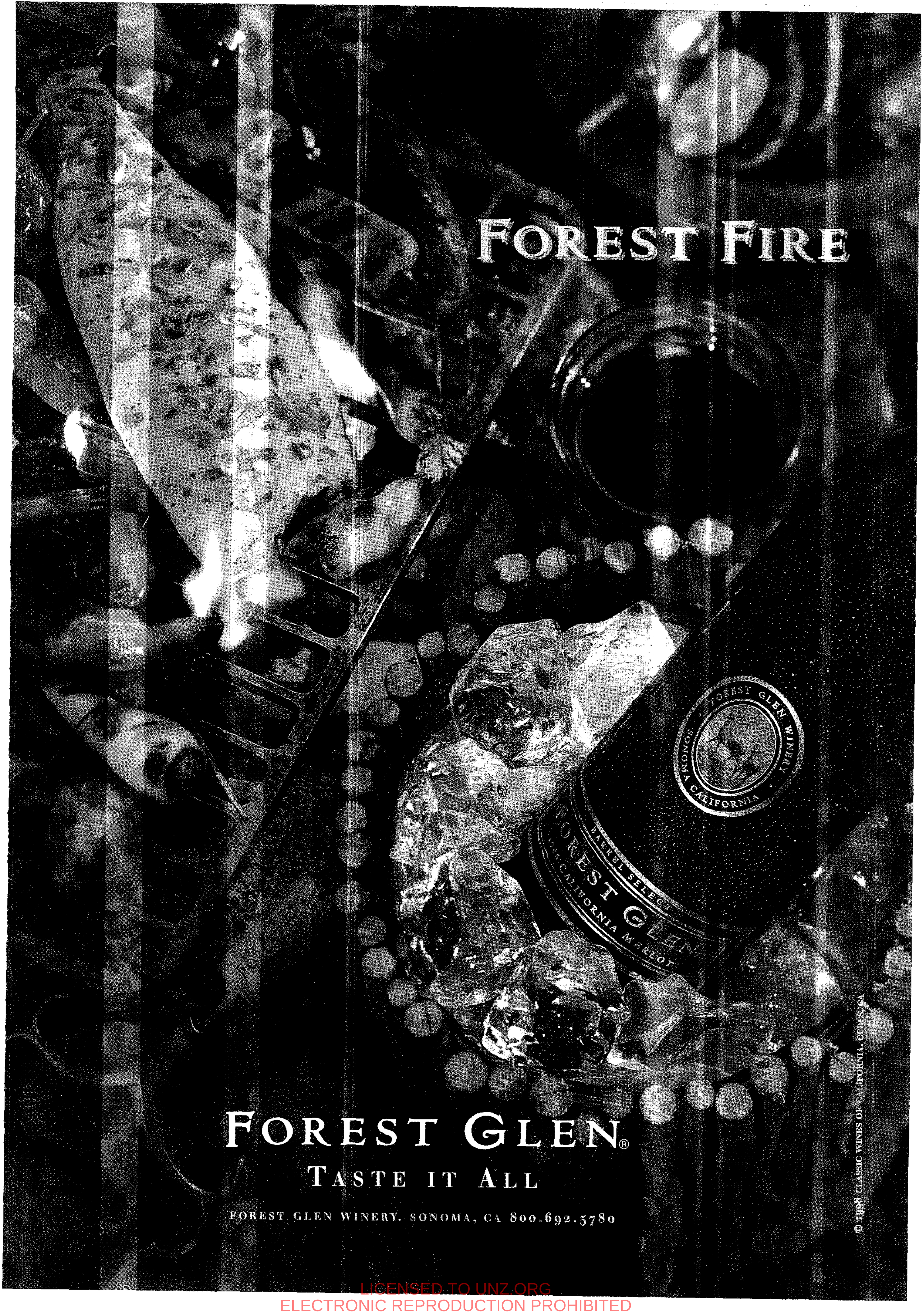
"BABY," Alan used to say, "you know, you'll never be *anyone* unless you move to New York." But the New York he liked to show me—the hippies on Eighth Street in the late sixties, the delights of Dean & Deluca in SoHo in the early eighties—had less to do with fame than with having things one's own way. He once told me a story about his father, who had come to New York from Virginia for a visit after the death of Alan's mother. Alan had agreed to drive him home again, and when he pulled up at the apartment to meet his father he found him out on the sidewalk, dancing by himself to some internal melody before a gathering crowd. "He never gave a fuck what anyone thought," Alan told me proudly.

The son of Orthodox Jewish immigrants from Russia, Alan's father had made his money as a travelling shoe salesman when he was a young man. Then, one day, after disembarking from a York River steamer at Claybank, Virginia, he found the entire outpost for sale and bought the place—house, dry-goods store, and dock—and settled down to raise a family. Alan's childhood was insular but idyllic, with cousins arriving by the boatload every summer. The good times ended when Alan was sent to prep school in Baltimore. "I hated it—I went from being the only Jew to attending a school full of Jews," he recalled.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, he turned nineteen and was sent to the Pacific. "Alan was a *casual*," Buzz said by way of explaining that, because Alan's official assignment papers had somehow been mislaid, he had been allowed to spend most of the war playing bridge aboard ship and, it seems, getting laid. As Alan would remark happily to friends, the thrill of illicit shipboard sex was incomparable. Upon returning home, he confided to his mother that he was a homosexual.

Aunt Frieda was a woman who liked fresh linen and fresh flowers every day; she was a Baltimore girl who had fashioned for herself the trappings of a Virginia aristocrat. According to Alan's sister Merle, Frieda was upset by her son's news but then decided to ignore it. Alan's sexual orientation was simply figured into the family equation without ever being discussed.

He attended the University of Virginia and, upon graduation, in 1950, moved to New York. He went to Columbia, and lived in a boarding house on 110th Street while working on a master's degree in creative writ-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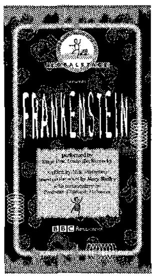

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ing. Though Jewish and far from an aristocrat, he adopted a pose of Southern gentility, which was helped along by a weekly allowance of fifty dollars. He had an intellectual's curiosity and a Southerner's affability: from the beginning, people wanted to know him.

Soon afterward, Alan fell in love with the Village—already a neighborhood congenial to those who viewed themselves as "against the American grain"—and moved to his first apartment there, on Perry Street. While uptown psychiatrists were decrying homosexuality as a perversion and suggesting electroshock as a cure, Alan was pursuing the subtle, nonverbal ways of making contact with those who were like him. He never felt it necessary, however, to keep his secret from the people closest to him. An aunt of mine told me that they often met at Howard Johnson's on Sixth Avenue late at night, to compare dates: "He would be in love with somebody, and I would be in love with somebody, and they were both the same sex."

In 1953, Alan ambled into the Stable Gallery, the legendary bastion of the avant-garde on Seventh Avenue between Fifty-seventh and Fifty-eighth Streets. The gallery was the creation of Eleanor Ward, whom Alan once described as "Joan Crawford, Bette Davis, and Barbara Stanwyck coming at you at once." Even though Alan knew nothing about art, she took a chance and hired him as an assistant.

"When I had been at the gallery for a couple of weeks, Eleanor developed this illness," Alan recalled. Eventually, she landed in a hospital. During one of Alan's visits, she confessed, "Oh, darling, I'm not sick—I'm madly in love with you."

"But I'm in love with a guy named Harold," Alan responded. His life in New York had officially begun.

"Eleanor, like so many people, didn't understand that her real life was much more interesting than the one she made up," Alan told me. Vaguely believed to have come from "old money" somewhere, she had in fact come from a small Pennsylvania hill town and had fabricated a débutante bio. For almost thirty years, Alan was her indispensable, if unacknowledged, partner in a gallery that discovered and promoted, among other artists, Cy Twombly, Robert Rauschenberg, Robert Indiana, Marisol, and Andy Warhol. Eleanor opened up the world of taste and ideas which Alan craved. He, in turn, brought a degree of order into her chaotic life: it was Alan who nurtured the talent and made sure that the artists were paid. He also devoted endless hours to picking the proper way to display a work. "A good picture has a presence," he once said.

I asked Alan one evening if he possessed a photograph of Eleanor. "Yes," Buzz interjected, and he raced toward an antique chest in the living room. Inside were photograph albums; their covers had been removed, and the pages tied with fine ribbons the color of sable. It was suddenly clear to me that Buzz had appointed himself the chronicler not just of his own career but of his relationship with Alan, both of which were well documented. Taking out a scrapbook, he rushed past snapshots of what looked to be a large American family who—to judge by the gnarled fence posts, desert landscape, and weathered faces—lived out West, to a photograph of Eleanor and Alan framed in the window of an old stone building. He then flipped to a page with a program for a Saroyan play. "This is from our first date," Buzz says. "I had tickets, so I called him up."

In the scrapbook Buzz had also pasted clippings of his professional biography from his dancing days. One paragraph reads:

> Born in the town of Snowflake, Arizona, Buzz had his first encounter with dancing when a travelling dance teacher stopped in town to give tap lessons to the local youngsters. Much as he wanted to enroll, family finances were at a low ebb, and Buzz, deeply disappointed, could only be a spectator. In his formal education, he specialized in music. Always in the corner of his mind was a desire to dance and whatever small musical compositions he wrote at school were done with the thought, "Is it danceable?"

He told me that he had been desperate to escape Snowflake, not only because of its geographical isolation but also because it had a substantial, and repressive, Mormon population. "I remember lying in the dirt thinking, I've got to get out" was how he put it. Buzz grew up on a farm, a restless, angry kid with a veneer of loopy charm from his father, who, along with being a rancher, was the local wrestling champ and an

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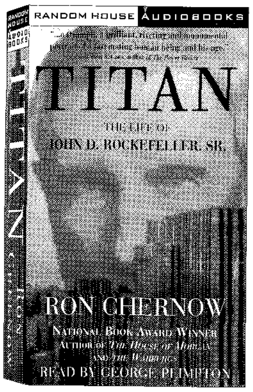

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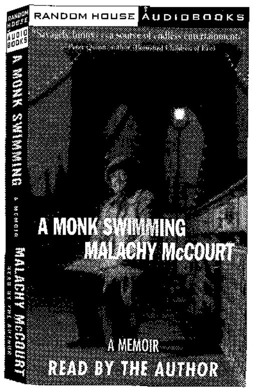

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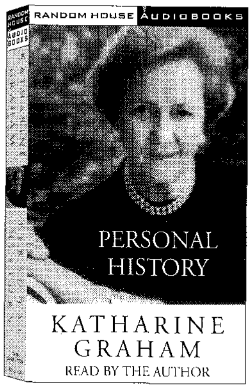

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amateur fiddler reported to have played a mean "Turkey in the Straw."

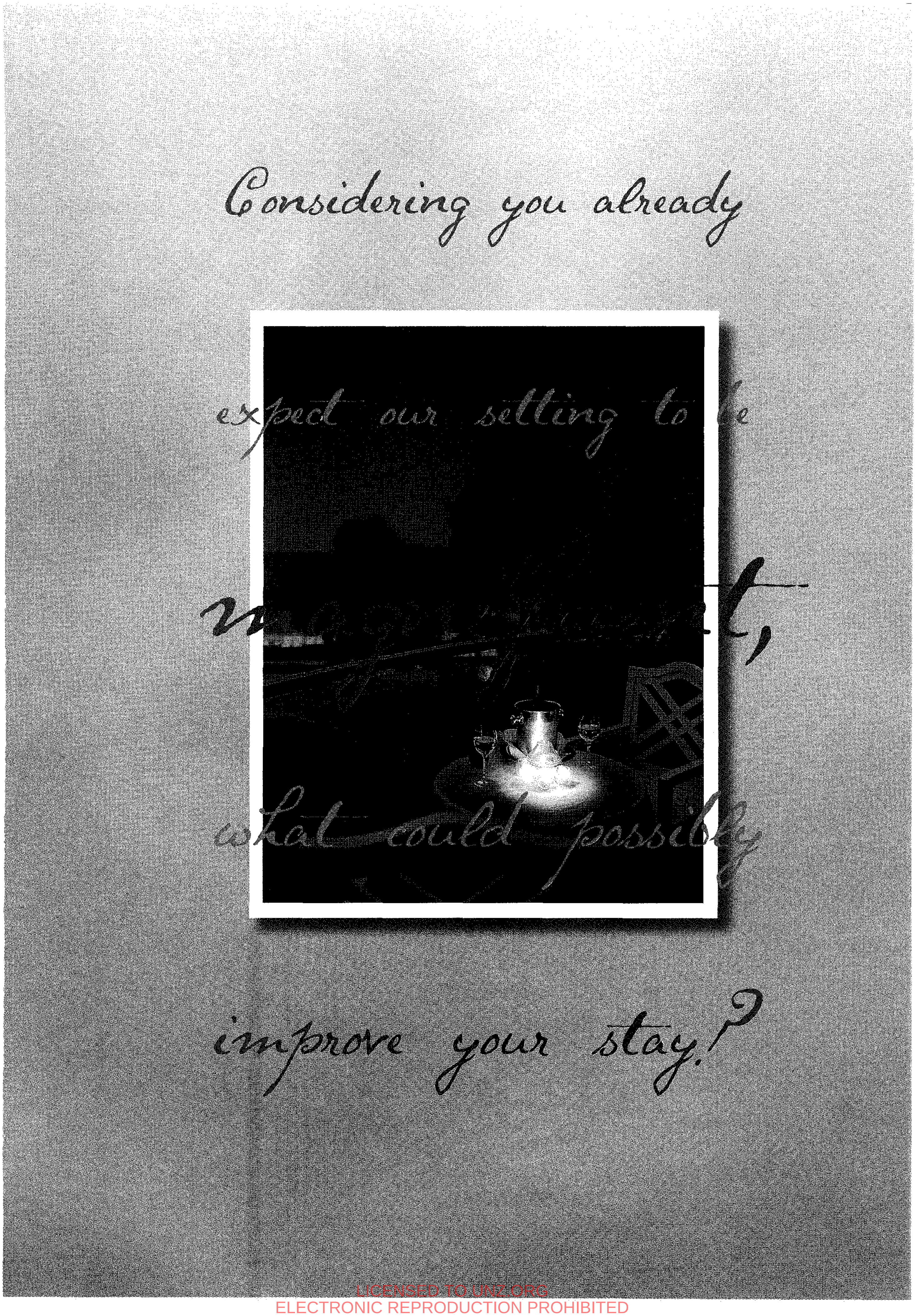
After Pearl Harbor, Buzz was drafted into the infantry and was stationed in Europe, where his agility won him a job escorting a general to sites under enemy fire. (Buzz could jump, literally, from foxhole to foxhole.) He won a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart, and was discharged in 1945. He went to Los Angeles to study ballet but ended up dancing for the maverick choreographer Jack Cole, a pioneer in blurring the lines between classical ballet and popular dance. "Because I could leap," Buzz explained. "That was it." On the spot, Cole took him to New York, where Gwen Verdon snapped him up for her act at the Copa in Miami. He never had to audition again.

"He was different then—so shy," Alan recalled. "And he dressed in the most unique way." The shyness concealed a ferocious talent. Buzz was what is known as a mimetic dancer: he could master a routine after seeing it once. In just a few years, he had established himself as an A-list Broadway dancer, working for choreographers like Jerome Robbins and Bob Fosse. He was a principal dancer in "Pal Joey," in 1952, and in "The Pajama Game," in 1954. (Before Buzz met Alan, he and Robbins lived together for five years, but that arrangement ended when they found sharing professional and domestic life incompatible.) He also worked for a time with the avant-garde choreographer John Butler, performed in Paris with Roland Petit's Ballets de Paris, and travelled to Hollywood to dance in "There's No Business Like Show Business" with Marilyn Monroe.

In between, he did his share of Oldsmobile and Buick industrial shows. "It was great fun," Buzz recalled. "We had to get up at eight in the morning and sing about tubeless tires. We just took our Dexamyl and went off. Everyone was on Dexamyl in those days." Not long ago, I rented the 1957 film version of "The Pajama Game," in which Buzz re-created his stage role. There he was, restored to youth, cartwheeling and careering ecstatically down a hill during a picnic scene. In the celebrated "Steam Heat" dance number, he flashes his bowler, thrusts his pelvis, cocks his hips, and sings in a husky, seductive whisper, transforming a plea for a labor union into a glorious paean to sex.

BUZZ and Alan first met in 1957, on Fire Island—Buzz mumbled something to me about having unbuttoned the first three buttons on his bathing suit for effect—and then met again, shortly afterward, at someone's East Side apartment. Alan asked for a cigarette, but turned up his nose at the one Buzz offered. "I went down and got him a pack of cigarettes," Buzz said, thereby revealing an accommodating side, which he would draw on for years to come. The two exchanged phone numbers, and Buzz spent the following week—the week he was making his début in "Bells Are Ringing"—wondering whether he should call Alan and ask him out. When he did, Alan laughed before saying yes, and then arrived late for their date: Buzz looked out his window and caught him killing time on the sidewalk by tying his shoelaces. They must have made an unlikely pair: a solitary Southern Jewish intellectual and, in the words of a friend, "this butch all-American kid." But from that night on they were a couple. It was Alan who asked Buzz to share a Village apartment—one that he had rented from two Baltimore lesbians. "Why don't you move in and see what happens?" Alan suggested. "After that," Buzz told me, "we never spent any time that wasn't together."

In the fifties and sixties, Alan and Buzz were as "out" as they could be and still maintain their careers. "All the Abstract expressionists were very straight—they were not even aware that a gay world existed," Alan said. Many of the gallery employees and museum curators whom Alan counted among his friends, though, were a part of that world. Buzz's situation was still more problematic. He remembers the Broadway chorus as a happy place, where being gay was considered a plus. "Nobody gave a shit," he told me. "If people had hangups, that was their problem. If you were in the chorus, the more outrageous you were the more they loved you." But it was also true, he noted, that male chorus dancers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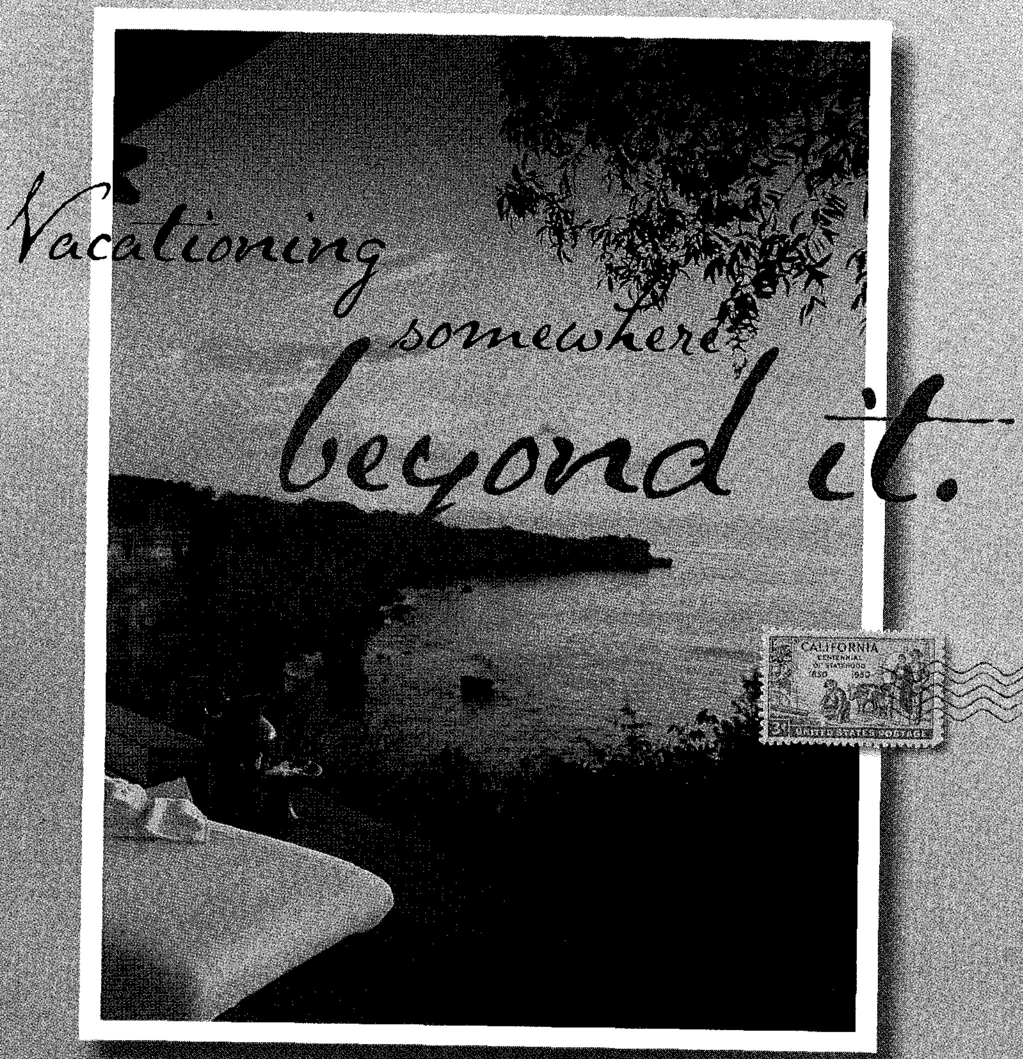
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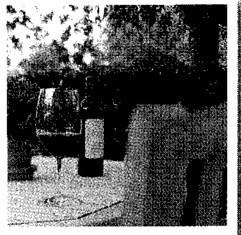

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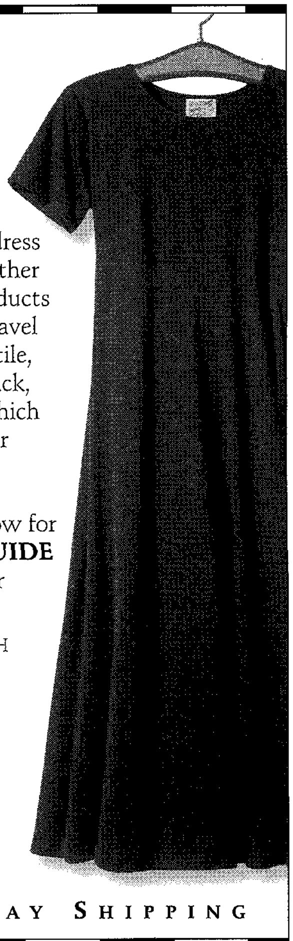
were selected for their butch characteristics. "I don't want any swishing" or "he's too fey" were common complaints. And, the higher the profile, the more perilous the revelation of homosexuality could be. The best choreographers ranged from deeply closeted ("I want you to know, I'm engaged," one announced to Buzz after their first night together) to openly homophobic (Agnes de Mille). Americans went to musicals to see their desires and fantasies onstage, but only up to a point: that those desires and fantasies were refracted through the sensibilities of gay choreographers and gay dancers was fine as long as everyone kept quiet about it.

Despite these difficulties, the early years of Alan and Buzz's relationship seem to have had the madcap edge of fifties romantic comedies. If Buzz was working in London, Alan flew over when the gallery closed for the summer. If Buzz was working in New York, they might grab a late-night bus for an impromptu vacation in Virginia, reading aloud from Gore Vidal's steamy gay novel "The City and the Pillar." Back in New York, if Alan had a show to hang, Buzz would appear, paintbrush in hand. "It was every two weeks, all winter long," Buzz recalled. "The Stable was known for having the best shows in town. Then we'd come home and drink and fuck till four in the morning."

The couple reserved their most withering contempt for closeted gays. "Coming out was not difficult for Alan and Buzz, and they could never quite perceive that coming out would be difficult for anybody else," a friend of theirs told me. Perhaps because they were not terribly interested in money or fame and because they had no children, the need for the closet was lost on both of them. As Buzz described gay life to me, "We thought it was *better*." They disdained the married composer who audiotaped his dalliances with young men, the famous writer who bragged that he had never performed oral sex but had only had it performed on him.

Buzz had been severely wounded in the infantry, and had been saved by a young medic whom he had known in basic training. The two met for lunch in New York once a year for several



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years, and then the man, who was married and had children, confessed his homosexuality and his love for Buzz. "And that was the end of it," Buzz told me, in a voice that brooked no sympathy for people who made a mess of such things. "I can't relate to closeted types. I can't imagine being so out of tune with who you really are."

OVER the years, Alan and Buzz became known as, simply, "the boys"—an affectionate but, as they aged, mildly pejorative moniker. The boys charmed their way into the Fortuny factory in Venice. The boys laughed at a shy new gallery artist named Andy Warhol, whom Alan had to persuade Eleanor to take on. The boys rescued Thanksgiving dinner in Connecticut when the wife of a noted (gay) designer was too drunk to do it herself. "Either of you boys know how to cook a turkey?" she asked, pulling a gigantic and still frozen bird from her refrigerator at four in the afternoon. The boys always knew what was best.

It has always been a point of pride with me that my family accepted Alan and Buzz on their own terms: there were never any big rejection scenes. Instead, Alan and Buzz gradually assumed the role of family arbiters. You could call them up to get their opinion of a paint color or a movie or a book, or even to chew over the latest engagement or parental indignity. They always had an opinion.

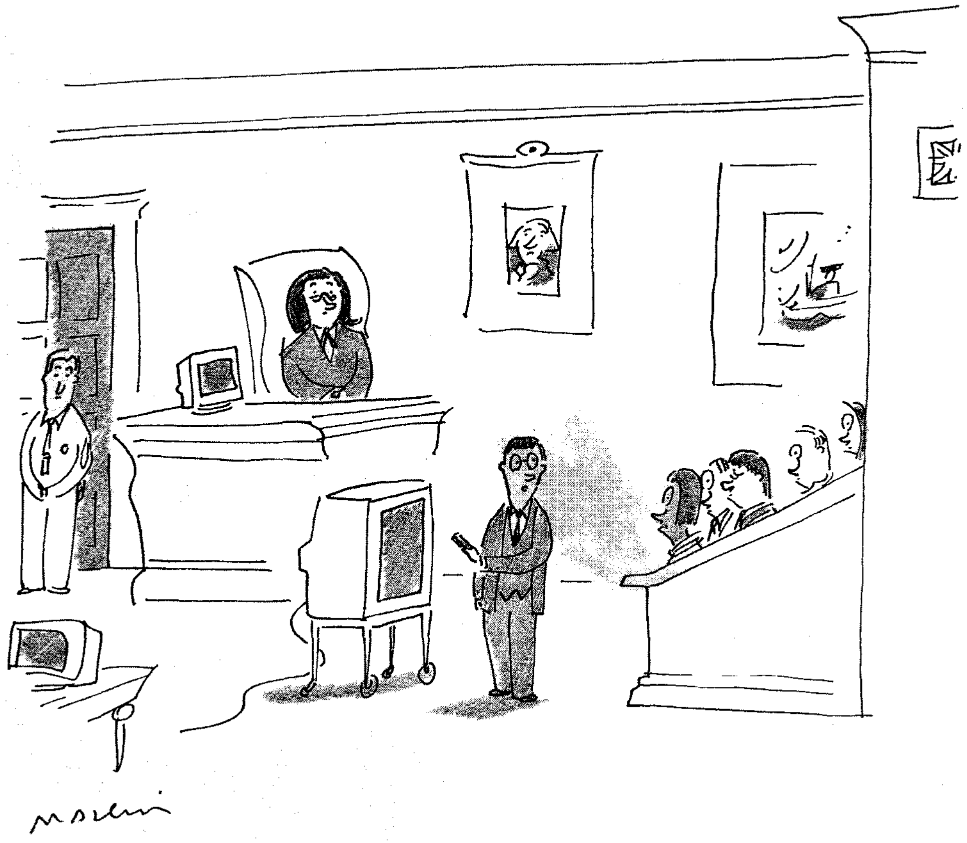
Things that they felt they could not share were communicated subliminally. When I was a teen-ager, in the sixties, they would breeze through San Antonio and sun themselves at the local pool, showing off tiny bathing trunks and the worked-on musculature that is common today but was a rarity then. At night, they'd go to bars I had never heard of, come back just before dawn, and sleep till noon. They drank and smoked excessively, photographed my mother as if she were part of a *Vogue* layout, and rearranged the furniture, both physically and psychologically. They brought sex into the house in a way that my parents could not have—sex without barriers or responsibilities.

Only in the last year has it occurred to me that the way my family took them in—a don't-ask, don't-tell sort of approach—must have had its own quiet pains. There were so many questions that Alan and Buzz were never asked. How did you meet? How did you fall in love? What do you fight about? How have you stayed together? There they are in my wedding pictures, beaming like any loving couple. I danced with Alan that night, and I danced with Buzz, and now it strikes me how much they might have wanted to dance with each other.

A STORY that Alan told a friend many years ago: Three years into his monogamous relationship with Buzz, a new man appeared in their lives. It gradually dawned on Alan that Buzz had been seeing him, and at first he was hurt and confused. If heterosexuals generally cope with infidelity in one of two ways—by forcing the partner to end either the affair or the marriage—Alan chose a third. "I dealt with it," he told his friend, which meant that he decided to join in.

The issue of gay promiscuity is still confounding. The many theories—that it is the ultimate expression of male sexuality, that it is the logical result of a society that prohibits gays from expressing their most fundamental desires, that it reflects an adolescent exuberance over the opening of the closet—have their uses. For Alan and Buzz, though, acceptance of promiscuity was simply their way of keeping their relationship together. Buzz, always the more sexually adventurous of the two, wanted other partners; Alan, more conservative, was reluctant but curious. "Psychologically, both of them understood that if somebody needs something on the outside it shouldn't be allowed to fracture the relationship," one of their friends told me. Up to that point, they had done everything in unison. "You'd ask Alan if he liked a movie and he'd say, 'We hated it,'" the friend continued. Sharing sexual exploration was just more of the same.

A sedate abstract painting hangs over Alan and Buzz's bed now, but in the late sixties and throughout much of the seventies something else occupied the space: a huge photograph of a belly dancer. The dancer's hair was long and stringy, and her face was in shadow, gaunt and



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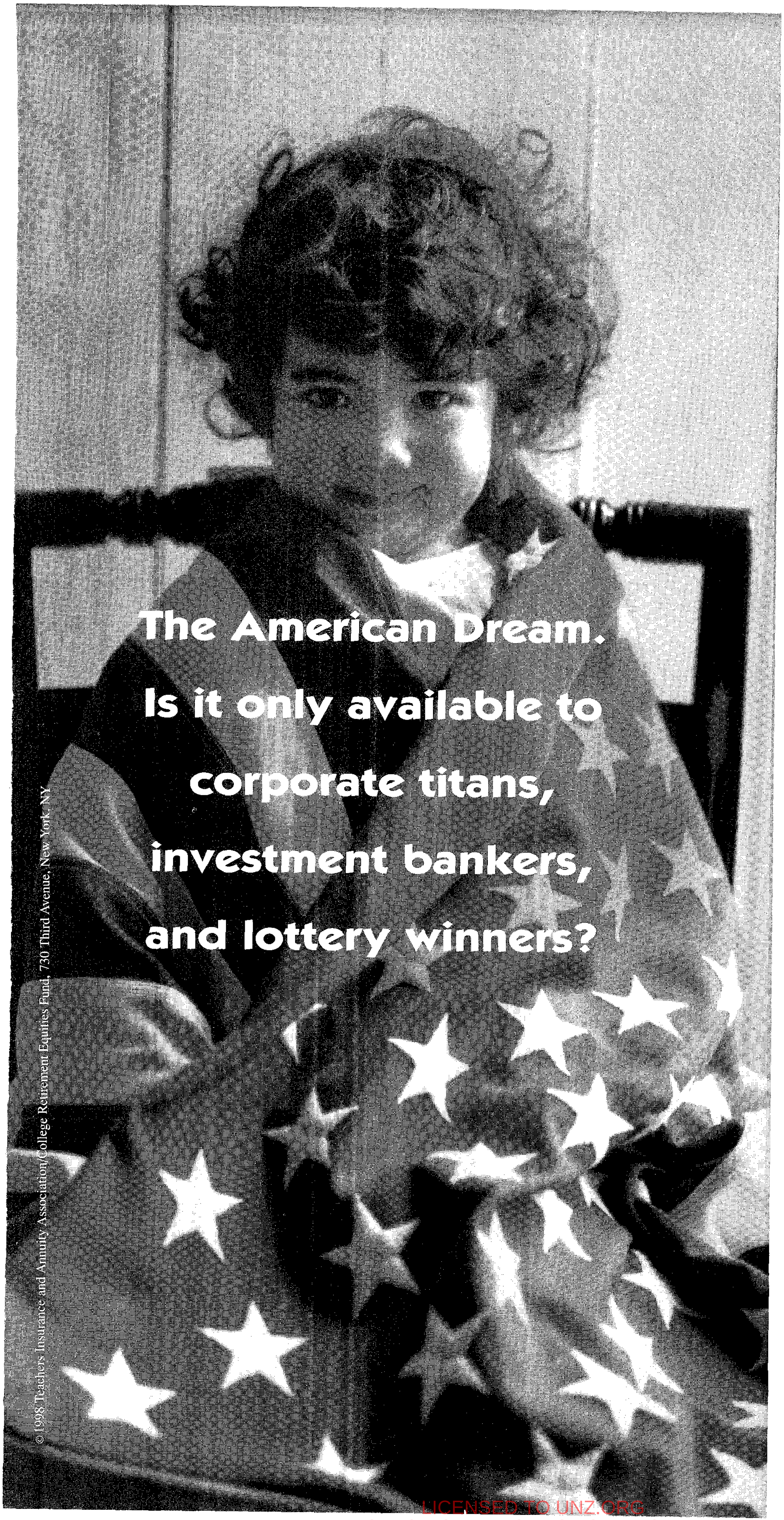
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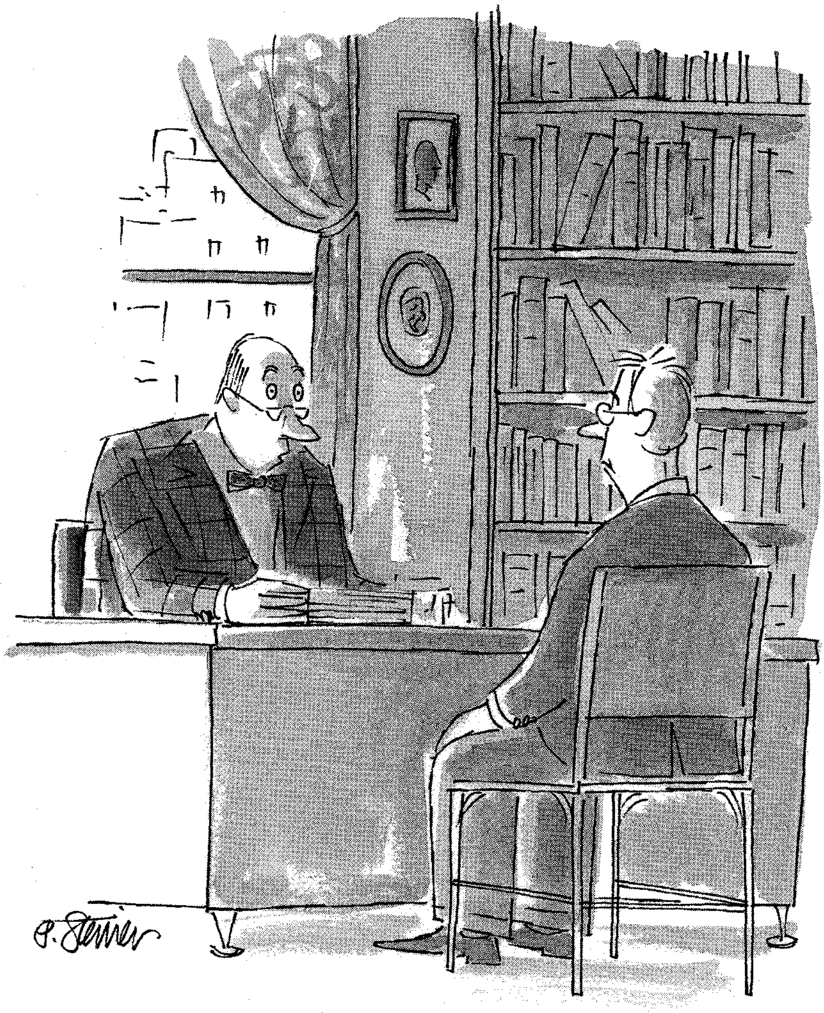

"This is a very important book. In fact, it's too important to publish."

indistinct. It was actually a photograph of Buzz in drag, taken in 1968, which was used behind the titles for the film version of Lawrence Durrell's "Justine." To me, that picture symbolized a time when their own lives darkened. "They lived without borders," another longtime friend of theirs says. "But then life made a border."

Alan and Buzz did not take part in the 1969 Stonewall uprising, for the Stonewall bar, on Christopher Street, was not their kind of place. Nor did they participate in the early gay-pride marches, which were held just steps from their apartment. But they threw themselves into the hedonism of gay liberation. They worked out to compete with men half their age. Alan hung the nude Fire Island photograph of himself and Buzz on the kitchen wall, explaining, "I want people to know we weren't always old farts." And, as always, they did everything in tandem. "We went to the baths together," Buzz said. "It was exciting to go out. It made sex at home more fun. We believed that more was more."

In 1970, Eleanor Ward, deserted by her financial backers and unsuited to the increasingly businesslike art world, closed the Stable Gallery. Alan considered opening a gallery of his own, but in the end he felt he couldn't risk it. He took a job at another midtown gallery and worked hard to upgrade the quality of its artists; still, he hated the place. He quit after several years and set himself up as a consultant. Then, in 1975, he suffered his heart attack.

As for Buzz, he had reached the age where he was no longer in demand as a dancer. In the late sixties, he worked with Julie Bovasso at La Mama, choreographing experimental plays—in one, he appeared nude except for a loincloth, and with his lips covered in phosphorescent paint—but he gradually stopped performing. At the same time, the heavy drinking that had seemed harmless and daring in his youth had turned Buzz, by his own admission, into "one of the world's worst drunks," and Alan into his chief apologist. "I hope you didn't mind Buzz's conversation last night," he might say in a morning-after phone call. "We don't see them anymore" became their way of describing relationships that had not weathered the storm. Once, in my teens, I ingenuously lectured Alan and Buzz about their smoking. I don't remember the substance of Buzz's reply—only that it was lengthy and toxic. When he finished, I left the room and, for a time, their life.

IN the early eighties, Alan and Buzz grew fond of a group of young men who shared an apartment on the Upper West Side. All were dancers, all were handsome, and all were sleeping with one another. One by one, these young men got sick, left, and did not come back. "When AIDS hit, it threw Alan and Buzz into shock," a friend recalled. "They knew that if they had been ten years younger they would have been trapped by it." They both tested negative. Looking back, Buzz said to me, "By the time people were dying right and left, we were already pushing seventy. We were lucky, I guess."

For them, AIDS meant that the goodbyes that would have been said as they approached old age were made not only to lifelong friends but also to younger and younger men. Because most of their friends worked in the arts, the devastation was especially pronounced. Many of Alan's painters and of Buzz's younger colleagues and dance students—they were simply gone. Instead of walks around the neighborhood, Alan and Buzz found themselves making the short trek to St. Vincent's Hospital over and over again.

The AIDS epidemic politicized them. They were infuriated by what they viewed as PBS's hypocritical lack of resolve in the face of the Christian right's attacks in 1991 on the documentary about gay life entitled "Tongues Untied." "It gave new meaning to 'Great Performances,'" Buzz reflected bitterly. Public television went off their list of

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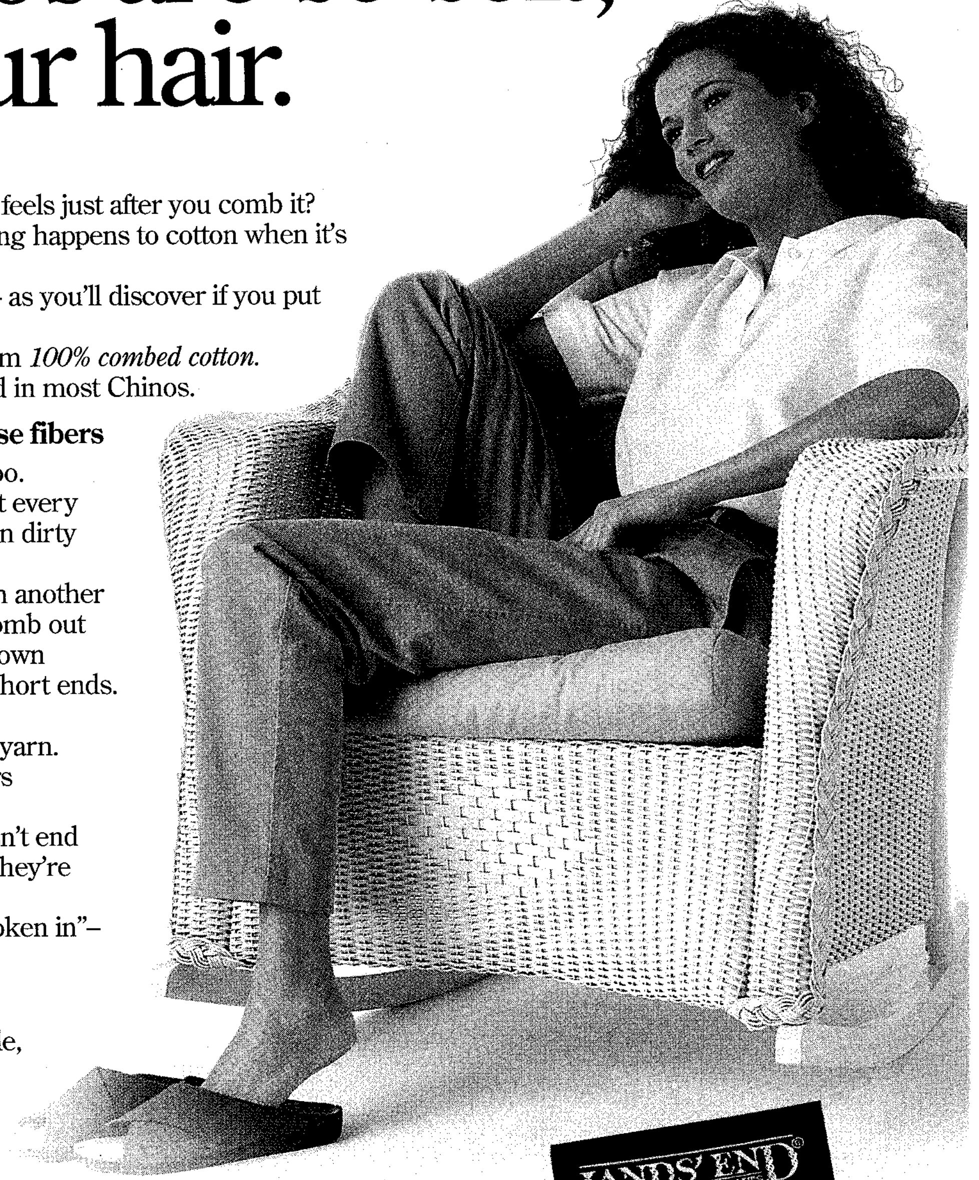

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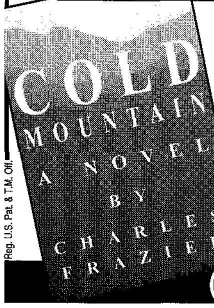

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charities, and their contributions to the Gay Men's Health Crisis increased.

By then, Buzz had been sober for a decade, and both he and Alan moved into an easy sort of retirement. "You had the sense there was no one on earth they'd rather be with at any given time," a friend observed. They travelled a bit, wandering the riverfront property that they planned to build on in Virginia, or rummaging for antiques in shops near the Delaware Water Gap. Mostly, they took comfort in staying home, whiling away the time with new friends, who were decades younger.

That they appeared happier and healthier than they'd been in years seemed miraculous to my family. "They've stopped drinking" became code for "The coast is clear," and little by little we all returned to the fold. "Mimi says you never pick up the check," Alan needled my youngest brother one night while we were on our way out to dinner. They were the constants in our domestic landscape. In family pictures, babies appeared, hairlines receded, people thickened in the middle and then vanished. But Alan and Buzz remained—except for a nod to sideburn length and fashions in eyeglass frames—essentially unchanged.

One day not long ago, after lunch at Bendel's, the three of us strolled down Fifth Avenue to the luxurious Japanese specialty store Takashimaya. We ambled through its hushed, museumlike floors and finally stopped in what could be loosely described as a lingerie section. There I spied a long shift of silver silk. "Try it on, try it on," they urged, and after some coaxing I agreed. In the dressing room, I discovered that the silk was absolutely transparent, and my hideous old floral underwear showed through. "We want to see!" they called, and while I demurred I could hear Alan praising me to the salesclerk. "Can you believe she's forty?" he said proudly. Finally, I did come out, to their great delight. And, as I modelled and giggled, I was no longer a middle-aged woman: I was young and beautiful, and, as always, they were there, nudging, approving, knowing just what was right for me.

"I DON'T intend to broadcast this," Alan said to me over the phone, "but things have not been going well." He and Buzz had just come back from Los Angeles, where they'd attended a reunion of theatre gypsies honoring Shirley MacLaine, only to find that, during their absence, two friends had died, and then there had been a call from Alan's doctor, who suspected, after looking at his X-rays, that he had lung cancer. Alan seemed genuinely surprised. Explaining his doctor's diagnosis, he punctuated every sentence with a nervous, self-deprecating laugh.

Once more they found themselves shuttling between the apartment and St. Vincent's. Just before Thanksgiving, Alan was hospitalized for surgery. He amused himself by extracting the private histories of the doctors and nurses assigned to his case, while Buzz brought him fruit baskets worthy of Vermeer. The cancer did not go away; Alan was eventually tethered to an oxygen tank—a treatment that was surely as much a blow to his sense of aesthetics as it was to his physical being.

It seemed odd to me to speak with them separately—to call Alan at the hospital and Buzz at home—and it was even stranger because their voices over the phone were almost indistinguishable. Gradually, however, Alan's began to grow weaker. "Hello, baby," he would say, with great effort. The family remained hopeful: we assured one another that his whispery tone was a put-on, for effect.

Alan died at home the following April. He must have known that death was coming: he shaved and dressed neatly every day, cleaned up his closets with what energy he had, pressed Buzz on the duties of an executor, and reminded him where his will was kept. "You've got to take care of yourself," Alan told him. Hoping to cheer him up, Buzz bought leeks and steak to cook for dinner, and put a swirling mass of pussy willows in a vase over the mantel, as if they might shade the bed. On the last morning of his life, Alan blacked out, then came to once, to find Buzz gripping his shoulders and calling his name. "Why are you shouting at me?" he asked. In less than an hour, he was gone. E.M.S. attendants came and tried to revive him while Buzz frantically looked for a piece of paper documenting Alan's request not to be resuscitated. Like any loving spouse, he was mindful of his companion's wishes to the end. ♦

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FAMILY ALBUM

THE SECRET WIFE

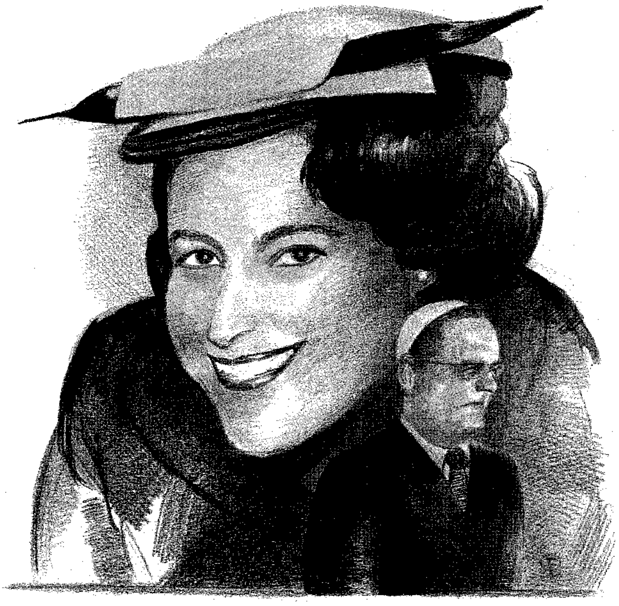
Uncovering the legacy of a father's lost love.

BY DANI SHAPIRO

IN 1953, nine years before I was born, my father fell in love with a young woman named Dorothy Gribetz. She was a beautiful Orthodox Jewish girl who was, at twenty-seven, startlingly old to still be single in the moneyed religious urban world of my father and his family. My father was fresh out of a miserable marriage, stinging from a custody battle for his six-year-old daughter, Susie.

He married Dorothy in the living room of her parents' modest Brooklyn apartment on April 11, 1954. She wore ivory satin, and carried a bouquet of pale flowers streaming with ribbons. Her enormous blue-green eyes were hidden beneath her veil, and a tiara rested on her dark, wavy hair. My father was handsome in a morning coat and silk ascot. His best friend and best man, Danny Schacter, stood behind him. The rabbi placed a glass wrapped in a cloth napkin on the floor, and my father raised his foot to perform the ritual that ends every Jewish wedding. He stamped hard and smashed the glass. The guests shouted "Mazel tov!" and applauded as he and Dorothy kissed.

My father was beginning his marriage with a secret that only a few people shared. At the end of the evening, after the dancing, cigars, and toasts—when he and Dorothy ran laughing out of the building and into the brand-new Oldsmobile coupe her father had given them as a wedding gift—Dorothy was bundled up in her sealskin coat and jaunty hat. A bit of black netting drifted over her pretty eyes. She looked the way any bride might, embarking on a life filled with plans and expectations.



As the rest of the family moved deeper into Orthodoxy, Paul moved—or was pushed—further from it.

TOM LULEVITCH

Dorothy was my father's second wife. My mother was his third. I was seventeen before I ever knew Dorothy had existed. My half sister, Susie, let it slip one day. "Once, when Dad, Dorothy, and I were upstate," she began, and I interrupted her: "Who's Dorothy?" The few details I learned that day of this marriage of my father's, a marriage so painful he never spoke of it, were all I knew for a long time. But, still, it made deep, emotional sense to me. My father had been missing for most of my childhood. He had retreated behind a wall of pills and prayer. Occasionally, playing ball with him in the back yard on a beautiful summer morning, I would catch a glimpse of the young man he must once have been—a deep belly laugh, a crushing hug, a sudden sparkle in his eyes—and I would want to reach out and hold onto him and to

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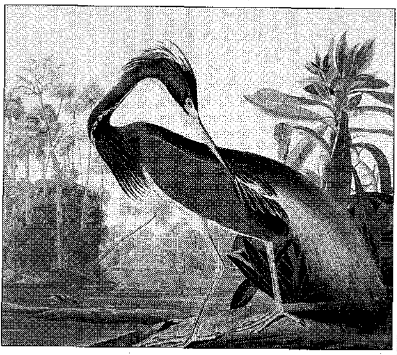

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make things better for him, without ever knowing what had gone wrong.

In a photograph snapped seconds before I was married last year, I am standing next to my husband-to-be under a canopy draped with my late father's ivory-and-white-striped *tallis*. In front of us, the rabbi recites a blessing. My heart is racing. I know this isn't a case of premarital jitters. I have no second thoughts, no doubts about the man I'm about to marry. Before we leave for Paris, I call my doctor and ask for a prescription for tranquillizers. I have never taken pills before. Pills make me think of my father. He was addicted to Valium, Percodan, and Empirin for most of his life. I have a childhood memory of him sitting at the kitchen table in front of a lazy Susan filled with prescription bottles, checking his pulse, two fingers pressed against the side of his neck, his face contorted with fear. I spend my honeymoon certain that I'm about to die. I feel this not in an abstract, intellectual way but in my bones. And I take the first tranquillizer of my life in order to get on the plane home.

I have been married three times—once at nineteen, then at twenty-eight, and now, for the third time, at thirty-five. My first husband was a shop owner, a boyish free spirit. He took off on buying trips for months at a time. I was a teen-ager, unprepared for marriage or solitude. I threw dinner parties, cooked the one dish I knew, and pretended to be a grownup. Less than a year after the wedding, I left. I don't think either of us was surprised, but I was a divorcée at twenty, and ashamed of it. My second husband was an investment banker. He was exactly the man I'd been brought up to marry: Jewish, stable, financially secure, with a life planned down to the last millisecond. I felt numb. I was giving up at the age of twenty-eight. The marriages had just this in common: they marked the only times in my life when I have been governed by severe, crippling anxiety.

As soon as I met Michael, I knew I was going to spend the rest of my life with him. The insanity of those earlier alliances became even starker when for the first time I realized what love

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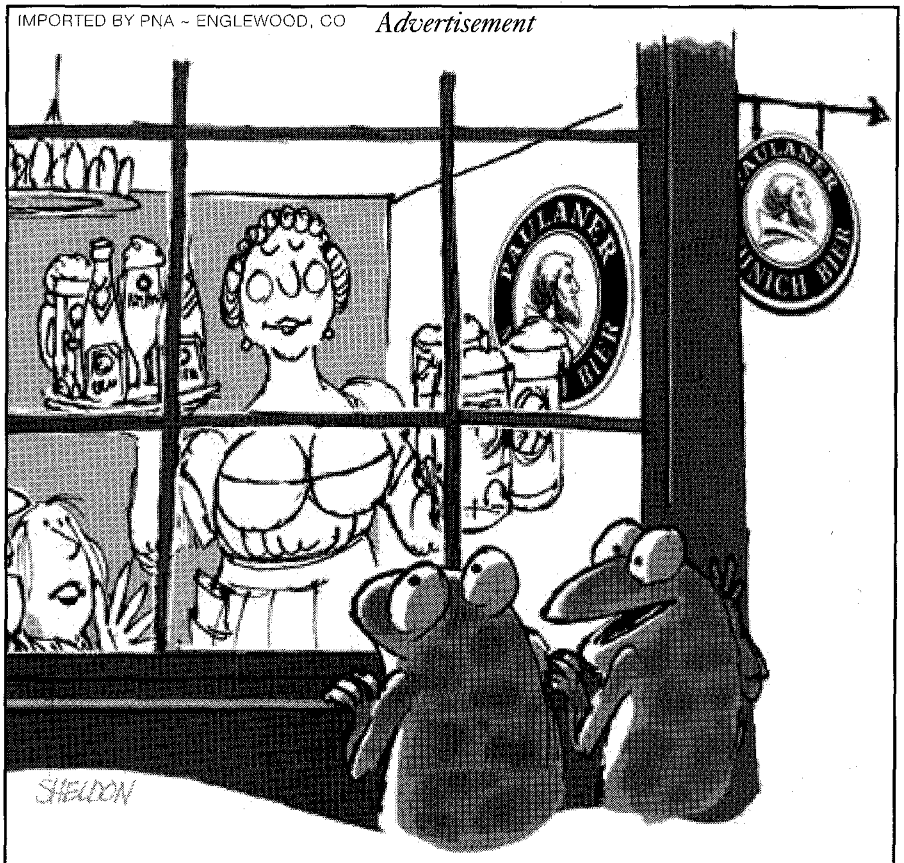

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actually felt like. Yet the panic persisted. Why did I equate being a wife with being destroyed?

ON THE TABLE

I was taught to smooth the aura at the end,
said my masseuse, hands hovering at the end.

Inches above my placid pummelled self
did I feel something floating at the end?

Or is my naked body merely prone
to ectoplasmic vapors to no end?

Many other arthritics have lain here
seeking to roll pain's boulder end on end.

Herbal oils, a CD playing soft
loon calls, wave laps, bird trills now must end.

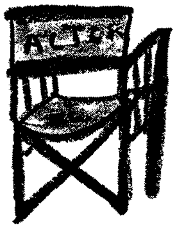
I rise and dress, restored to lift and bend,
my ethereal wisp invisible at the end.

—Maxine Kumin

My father's first wedding, to Susie's mother, had been a gala, candle-lit affair in the grand ballroom of the Waldorf-Astoria, marking the union of two powerful Orthodox clans. Elaine Brody was from a textile and real-estate dynasty whose properties included the Essex House and the Fifth Avenue Hotel. Her great-grandfather had been the chief Orthodox rabbi of New York. My father never even proposed to Elaine; his parents proposed to hers.

After the wedding, he began to work at his father's silk mill, in Blackstone, Virginia, and would travel there for two weeks of each month. My grandfather was a self-made millionaire, and my father was firmly under his control. He didn't even receive a salary. Whatever he needed in the way of money he had to petition for. When Susie was a toddler, my father and Elaine moved into an apartment on Park Avenue. But Elaine never accepted the role of traditional Jewish wife. She had been a serious pianist before getting married and wanted to continue to perform and even, perhaps, to pursue a doctorate. Nine years into their marriage, my father returned home from a trip to Blackstone to find the apartment empty. His wife and child were gone. The furniture was gone. Only his clothes remained, folded neatly on the top shelves of the closets.

Divorce was unheard of in their circle, a rarefied community of Eastern European Jews who had brought their Old World values with them to America. Everyone pitied my father, but also backed away from him. What had he done to deserve such bad luck? Everyone knew something about it: Elaine had always been too ambitious for her own good, people gossiped over ice-cream sodas at Schrafft's or lunches at the Tip Toe Inn, on Broadway and Eighty-seventh. She had left my father without even a bed to sleep in. And then there was talk that she had been having an affair with Susie's pediatrician.

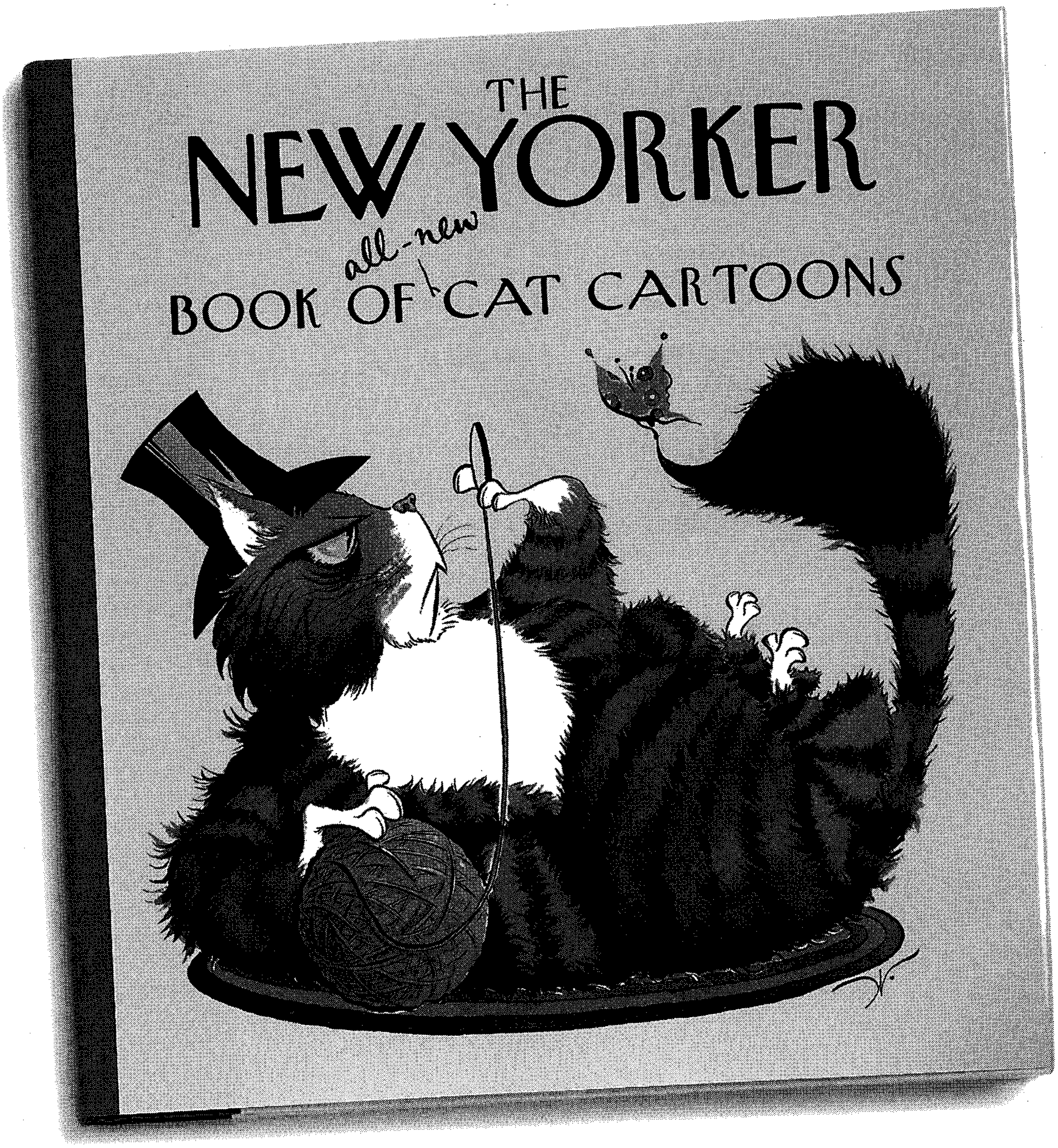


My father first met Dorothy Gribetz at the Brunswick Hotel, in Lakewood, New Jersey. Since his separation, he had been trying to meet eligible Orthodox women, going to kosher resorts like Grossinger's or the Concord, in the Catskills, or the Brunswick, where Dorothy was staying with her parents. She was devout, educated (with a degree from Cornell and a master's from Columbia), and warm. She was kind to Susie. Orthodox Jews in the nineteen-fifties weren't as strictly observant as they've since become, and my father and Dorothy had a courtship typical of its time. She saved the orchids he sent her each week and pinned them to her bedroom wall. On their Saturday-night dates, after Shabbos, they'd stop into a cocktail lounge for Cuba libres. They'd go ballroom dancing at the Plaza or the Pierre. For a nice kosher dinner they'd go to Lou G. Siegel's, on Thirty-eighth Street. My father presented Dorothy with an emerald-cut diamond engagement ring—and this time he proposed himself.

The summer before she met my father, Dorothy had a cough she couldn't shake. Her doctor told her it was whooping cough, and he hospitalized her briefly. While Dorothy was having tea at the Waldorf-Astoria, the winter before her wedding, my father's younger sister, Shirley, noticed her carefully examining her cup before taking a sip. Dorothy explained that she had caught a virus in Nantucket the summer before, and she believed it was from drinking tea out of a cracked cup. My father's family became concerned. Dorothy would grow suddenly pale, and unnaturally dark circles would appear under her eyes. On the advice of his parents, my father called Dorothy's internist. The doctor assured him that Dorothy was fine.

But a distant cousin of my father's who was an intern at the same hospital had interpreted Dorothy's pattern of symptoms, and he didn't think she was fine. He stole a peek at her medical records, and saw page after page of scrawled blood-test results: she had Hodgkin's lymphoma, at the time a uniformly fatal illness. Once diagnosed, most patients could be expected to live about a year. Not knowing what to do with this information, the cousin called my father's best friend, Danny, and told him what he had learned. Danny was married to the daughter of the renowned rabbi Joseph H. Lookstein, and he immediately went to his father-in-law for advice. The rabbi was emphatic: Danny had to tell my father what he knew.

The wedding was two weeks away. That night, Danny went to see my father, who was camping out in his parents' study, a black-and-gold book-lined room twenty-seven floors above Central Park West. Oil portraits of the Shapiro ancestors—men with white double beards and black skullcaps—



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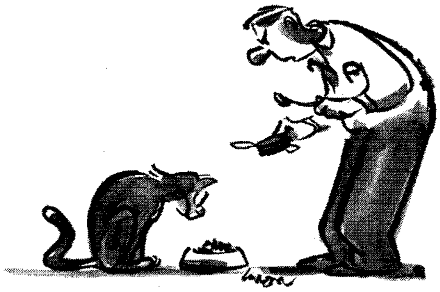

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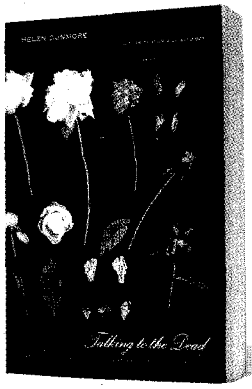

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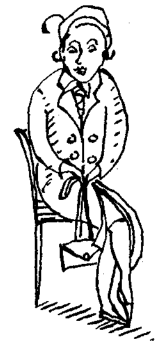
hung on the walls. There he broke the news to him. Dorothy was dying. She didn't know. Only the doctors and her father knew the truth, and a decision had been made to protect her. Danny advised him not to marry Dorothy, for the sake of his future—his reputation was already tarnished as a divorced Orthodox man in 1954—and for the sake of his six-year-old daughter, who had already lost enough.



The morning after Danny's visit, my father took a Checker cab to Brooklyn to see Dorothy's father. Louis Gribetz was a short, wiry man, a respected attorney who had written a book about Mayor Jimmy Walker and made an unsuccessful run for City Council. He had studied for the rabbinate. He would have known the Talmud generally prohibits telling a terminally ill patient the truth about her condition. Dorothy was the oldest of his three children. Eleven years earlier, the youngest, a son named Stanley, had died at the age of seven, of rheumatic fever. Louis, in his living room high above Grand Army Plaza that night, explained to my father that he hadn't told him because he wanted his daughter to know happiness in the last months of her life.

My father postponed his wedding to Dorothy for ten days. He had a boil on his stomach, and he checked into Beth Israel Hospital on Friday morning to have it removed, and to buy some time. He didn't get in touch with Dorothy to let her know, and once it was sundown on Friday, the Sabbath, he wouldn't be able to call her until at least sundown on Saturday. In the meantime, his sister Shirley made arrangements to come down on the overnight train from Boston. My father was determined that his parents shouldn't be told about Dorothy's illness. He had been under his father's thumb his whole life. This time, he was going to make his own decision. But he needed advice. The next day, through a series of favors and connections, Shirley reached and made an appointment to see the Grand Lubavitcher Rebbe, Menachem Schneerson.

In 1954, decades before he was thought of as the Messiah by many in the Lubavitcher community, Rabbi Schneerson was already a mythic figure. While my family were considered Orthodox by most standards, Hasidim would have considered them assimilated. The Shapiros and their crowd kept their religious practices private. They didn't wear yarmulkes on the street; they ate dairy or fish in regular, non-kosher restaurants; men and women danced together cheek-to-cheek. Shirley and my father knew that their parents had met Schneerson and respected him, but in turning to him they were moving outside their social circle.

Shirley is now seventy-four, and the grandmother of twenty. Her oldest son is an Orthodox rabbi, and most of her male grandchildren wear *payess* and dark clothes. I haven't visited her often. By the time I was born, my father had moved—or perhaps was pushed—away from the Orthodox fold as Shirley and her family became even more deeply involved in it. My father had been divorced, then widowed, and had then married a woman—my mother—who wasn't religious. With each move he drifted further away from the Manhattan *shuls* of his youth and the community that went along with them.

"That day, I took a taxi to Crown Heights," Shirley told me. "I was wearing my suit from Saks, but I was worried that I didn't look religious enough to meet the Rebbe. So I had the taxi stop at a store on Delancey, and I ran inside and bought a *tichel*, a black rag. I took off my fancy hat and tied the *tichel* under my chin. When I got to 770 Eastern Parkway, I was shown straight into the Rebbe's study. He was such a handsome man, with clear, clear eyes and a snap-brim fedora. His desk was absolutely clean. He sat quietly while I told him the whole story. And when I finished he was quiet for a few minutes. And then he said, 'Tell your brother to postpone and postpone.' "

When Shirley got back to Beth Israel, prepared to convey the Rabbi's advice to my father, there was Dorothy, sitting on my father's bed, holding his hand, looking incandescent in a coral-colored dress that set off her dark hair, and a black velvet hat. Her cheeks were flushed, and her eyes shone.

"Shirl, can you imagine? I was trying on my wedding veil when I heard Paul was in the hospital!"

My father was ashen, propped up in

bed, still weak from his surgery. His head was bowed, and he was stroking the inside of Dorothy's wrist, tracing the map of pale-blue veins. Later, when Dorothy left, Shirley told my father about Schneerson's advice.

"I can't do that to Dorothy," he said.

AFTER the wedding, Dorothy said she wanted to start a family as soon as she felt better, but late that summer she was hospitalized. She had a lymph node removed from under her arm, and she was treated with mustard gas. When she came home, she had weakened considerably. She was no longer able to get up in the morning on Shabbos to set the table, so she did it with Susie's help the night before. She never complained, but my father told Susie to be especially gentle with Dorothy. She wasn't feeling well.

Just before the High Holidays, my father and Dorothy moved into an apartment at 50 Plaza Street, on the same floor as Dorothy's parents. It was an apartment big enough for a family, and it had views of Grand Army Plaza and the Brooklyn Museum. For Dorothy, it was an exciting new beginning. She began to furnish the apartment lovingly, ordering curtains, sofas, rolls of wall-to-wall carpeting. But, for my father, being near Dorothy's parents probably meant that he'd have more help with Dorothy when the time came.

On Rosh Hashanah morning, Dorothy and her sister, Grace, were dressing for *shul* in their old girlhood bedroom. Dorothy was wearing an ivory silk blouse with silk-covered buttons. Suddenly she sat down on the bed, her face white, the black circles appearing.

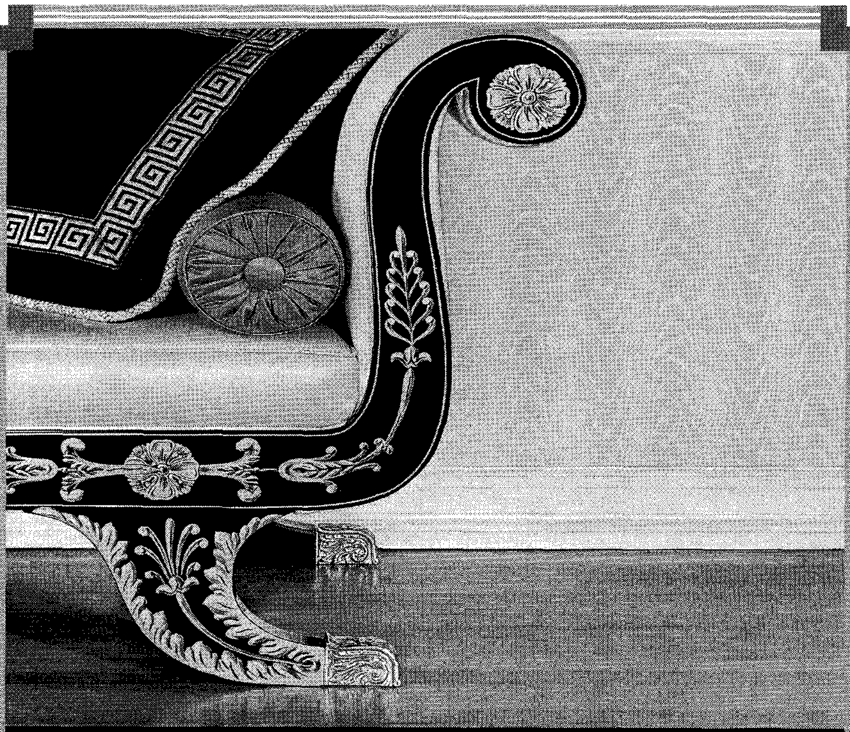
"I'm too sick to go to *shul*," she whispered. Then she unbuttoned her blouse with shaking fingers. "Grace, will you wear this to *shul* for me? That way, at least a part of me will be there."

As Grace was putting on Dorothy's blouse, Susie came bouncing into the room in a new dress, excited about going to temple, wanting to see what was taking so long.

"Susie, I can't go to *shul*," Dorothy told her. "But will you say a prayer for me?"

"You can't say a prayer for another person," Susie replied. "You have to pray for yourself."

In October, on Sukkoth, the holiday



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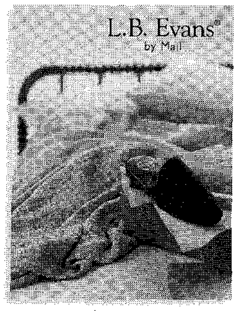

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that celebrates the autumn harvest, Dorothy was in bed reading a magazine when she began to have trouble breathing. My father sent Susie outside to roller-skate. He called an ambulance, and Dorothy was taken into Manhattan, to Memorial Hospital. My grandfather came up from Virginia when he heard the news. He stood in the doorway of the waiting room and looked at Shirley through his pince-nez. He was an imposing man, portly and bald, and most people's first reaction to him was fear.

"What's wrong with Dorothy?" he asked.

Shirley looked up at him, shaking her head slightly. The word "cancer" was never uttered.

"She's very, very sick, Dad."

My father led my grandfather into Dorothy's room. She was propped up in bed, and there were tubes and wires everywhere. Finally, she looked every bit as sick as she was. She was drawn and terribly thin, and her eyes were sunken.

"I wanted to say this in front of you, Dad," she said to my grandfather. "I wanted to thank Paul for giving me the happiest six months of my life."

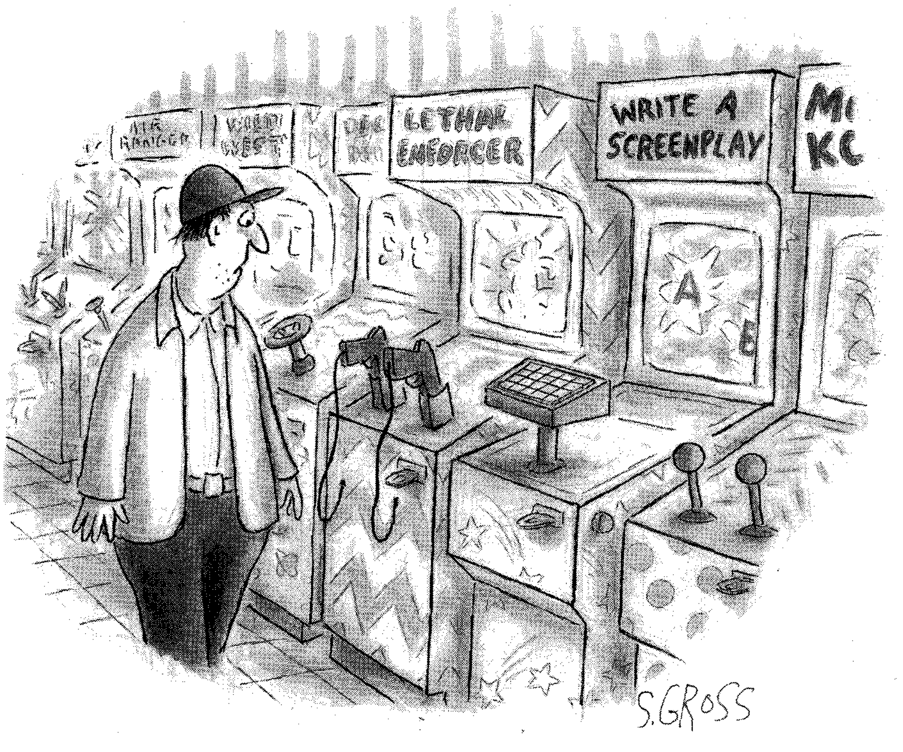
Afterward, when it was all over, my father returned to the apartment, stepped over the still rolled-up carpeting Dorothy had ordered only weeks before, and headed down the long corridor into their bedroom. There on the bed was the magazine she had been reading just before she was taken to the hospital. It was open to an article about Hodgkin's lymphoma.

"AFTER the ambulance came and took Dorothy away, I didn't see Dad for two weeks," Susie says, as we sit in her East Village apartment. "He called me every night, and every night I'd ask him where he was. And he'd say, 'Where do you *think* I am?' And I'd say, 'The hospital.' And then I'd ask how Dorothy was, and he'd tell me she was resting.

"He picked me up on a Wednesday night after those two weeks had gone by. He looked like hell, and he was quieter than usual. We were in a taxi going through Central Park on our way to Grammy and Grampy's when I asked him how Dorothy was. And he told me that Dorothy had died. She had died a week before. They had the funeral, buried her, sat shivah—all without telling me."

MY parents kept secrets. Dorothy was only one of them. My mother's first marriage, an aunt's nervous breakdown, an uncle's attempted suicide—all were kept secret. On the surface, everything seemed perfect, but why was my father so unhappy all the time? Why did my mother seem so constantly on edge?

Some of the friction between my



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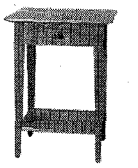

parents had to do with my father's strict religious beliefs. My mother was fun-loving and glamorous, the head of her own small advertising agency when she met my father. She had no idea that becoming Orthodox meant more than keeping a kosher home and going to *shul* on holidays. Orthodoxy was its own universe—a universe as suspicious of her as she was of it. As the years went by, we rarely saw my father's family, and when we did they seemed foreign to me, with their yarmulkes and thick glasses. They were pale and wan with something called "yeshiva pallor." On our way home from visiting, my mother would make fun of them, and my father would become even quieter than usual.

I grew up in a house full of fear. We were protected by three different kinds of alarm systems: pads on the floors under the rugs, a motion detector, and panic buttons that could be pressed in an emergency. I wasn't allowed to run barefoot on the lawn; I was slathered with sun lotion year-round; if a bee buzzed near me, my mother would swoop down and rush me into the house. I never had chicken pox, measles, or mumps—any of the childhood diseases. I wasn't around children enough to have them. But the real dangers were inside our house.

What I remember is the silence. Most of the time it was as quiet as a wax museum, and my parents spoke to each other, at least in front of me, with brittle politeness. And then every once in a while there would be the booming sound of my father's voice, or the loud slam of the back door as my mother went outside to sit on the cold aluminum of the milk can and smoke a cigarette. These fights didn't seem to have beginnings or ends. But I knew my parents would never divorce. I couldn't have articulated it back then, but my parents seemed to be holding their fragile world together with some sort of tacit agreement that their histories and secrets—the whole of their past lives—could be kept from each other, and from me.

Once I knew about Dorothy, from time to time I would ask my mother about her. "They tricked your father into marrying her," she'd say. "It was a terrible thing they did." For my mother, it was as if my father's second wife had barely existed. But Dorothy was very real for my father. The one time I

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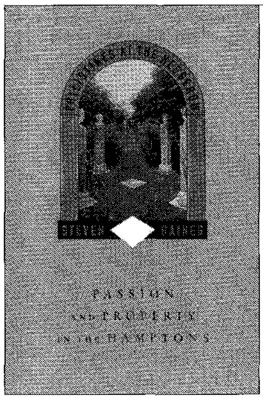

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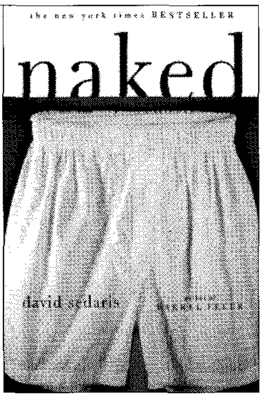

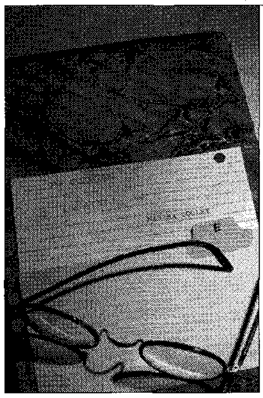

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asked him about her, I glimpsed pain in his eyes so intense I never asked again.

Grace Gribetz Glasser, Dorothy's younger sister, wasn't easy for me to track down. She's married to I. Leo Glasser, the federal judge who presided over the John Gotti trial, and they lead a quiet, private life in a prosperous, protected section of Rockaway Park, facing the ocean. But when I visited her, almost a year into my new marriage, she seemed entirely unfazed that her late sister's husband's daughter would have come looking for her. "Hello, dear," she said, as if she had been expecting me. I recognized her face from wedding photos, a wide-eyed young woman holding her sister's bouquet. She is now sixty-nine, with silver hair.

"You look like your father," she said, ushering me in.

It was a few days before Purim. Between us, on her kitchen table, was a shoebox full of photographs of Dorothy. Grace was twenty-five when Dorothy died. She has four children and nine grandchildren. Her oldest daughter is named Dorothy.

Together we shuffled through the photographs. Dorothy on a picnic blanket with one boyfriend, on the beach with another. Dorothy and my father at their wedding. Grace handed me a photo of my father in a navy-blue suit, white shirt, and silver tie, his hands resting on the back of a chair as he turns to the camera, laughing. I had never seen this expression of pure, unadulterated joy on my father's face.

"I used to meet your father for lunch every once in a while," Grace said. "I remember he called me when you were getting married. When was that?"

I knew she was referring to my first marriage—the only one for which my father was alive.

"He was worried," she continued. "He wasn't happy about it at all."

I wondered if my mother knew that my father stayed in touch with Dorothy's sister. I doubt it. Now I followed her down a hall and into her bedroom. The life she has: the children, the grandchildren, the hamantaschen in the oven—that was the life my father was supposed to have had with Dorothy. Dorothy and my father would have lived in Brooklyn, or on Central Park West, or on the beach at Rockaway Park. They would have been active in their local synagogue, had a bunch of children, and lived an observant life.

Grace opened a walk-in closet, and I heard the scrape and rattle of hangers. She emerged from the closet carrying a blouse. It was once ivory silk, with ivory silk-covered buttons. Now it was yellow and stained, and much too big for her small frame.

"I've worn it to *shul* every Rosh Hashanah for forty-four years," she said. Her voice was sweet and sorrowful. "It's so stained now I can't even take off my jacket.

"I wish my sister were here to meet you," she said. "But, if she were here, you wouldn't be."

After Dorothy died, my father looked for a new apartment. There was a building going up on East Ninth Street near Broadway, and he went with his sister to see it. They were sitting in the rental office when an impeccably dressed dark-haired woman in her early thirties walked in the door. Shirley noticed that she wasn't wearing a wedding ring, and nudged my father.

A few months later, after my father had moved into that building, he saw the dark-haired woman on the street. It was Shabbos, and she was carrying a hammer, modern girl that she was, on her way home to install bookcases. Obviously, she wasn't observant—a hammer? on Shabbos?—but he was pretty sure she was Jewish. They stopped and chatted, and he caught her first name, Irene. He knew she lived on the block, and the next day he spent his morning poring through the Manhattan phone book looking for Irenes on East Ninth Street.

During my parents' courtship, my father continued to spend weekends at Grossinger's and the Concord, in search of an Orthodox woman. It was unheard of to marry outside Orthodoxy—it was almost like marrying out of the faith. But on September 4, 1957, he and Irene were married, at Young Israel on Sixteenth Street.

A photograph of my parents at their wedding hangs over the desk where I write. They are walking up the aisle, and my mother is smiling triumphantly. My father's hand is balled into a fist. Within a year, he had injured his back and become addicted to painkillers and tranquillizers. For all the years of my childhood, my father walked gingerly, as if constantly aware that collapse was possible, and as the tension in our home grew he became quieter and quieter. Sometimes I would try to catch his eye, to wink at him, to let him know I understood. But I didn't understand. And he continued sliding away. ◆

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ONWARD AND UPWARD WITH THE ARTS

CHASING THE ANTI-DIVA

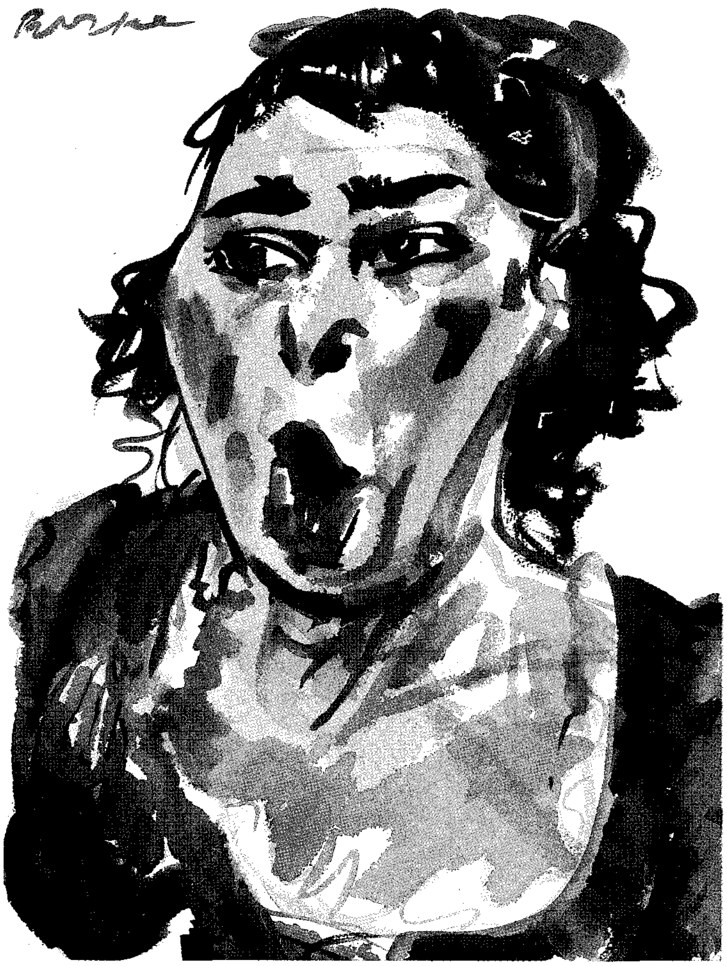
The author catches up with the high-flying, jet-hating Cecilia Bartoli at crucial moments in her career.

BY MANUELA HOELTERHOFF

HOUSTON, October, 1995. "It was like this," Cecilia Bartoli's mother, Silvana, is telling me. "When Cecilia was small, she liked to sing as much as talk. Always humming around the house, imitating us. I thought she was musical, and she had some piano lessons. When she was fifteen, I said, 'Cecilia, let's see if you have a voice.' We tried. There was a voice. She didn't want to go to the conservatory. She was dancing flamenco."

I am sitting under a green-and-white umbrella by the pool of a house in the River Oaks section of Houston, waiting for the entrance of Italy's most famous junior diva. She's getting herself ready for the day in the vine-covered pool house that belongs to a throat specialist whom the mezzo-soprano met when she was at the Houston Grand Opera, two years ago, as Rosina in "Il Barbiere di Siviglia." Now she's back to sing the rags-to-riches heroine in another Rossini opera, "La Cenerentola," which turns "Cinderella" into a farce about a dysfunctional Italian family that's ruled by a cruel buffoon. His abused stepdaughter has become Bartoli's signature bel-canto role, and its dazzling closing aria, "Nacqui all'affanno e al pianto," has become her greatest hit—what "Nessun dorma" is for Luciano Pavarotti.

Bartoli's mother, who is in her late fifties, is an unassuming woman who gives the impression of being not entirely secure in the glamorous new world her daughter has opened up for her. Her brown eyes are careworn, and her sentences often end with a small shrug accompanied by *forse* ("maybe") and *ma* ("but"). I ask her when Cecilia gave up flamenco. "After she sang on a variety show called 'Fantastico,' hosted by Pippo Baudo," Silvana says. Baudo is a popular talk-show host—Italy's Johnny Carson—and he is married to Katia Ricciarelli, a briefly fabulous soprano bombshell. I've seen a tape of the show. "Well," Ricciarelli is heard saying to her husband, "I'm so glad she's a mezzo-soprano."



The director Jonathan Miller compares Cecilia Bartoli to "some wonderful, beautifully made piece of confectionery."

PHILIP BURKE

"She was nineteen," Silvana continues. "Two years later, she sang in a tribute to Maria Callas on French television. It was plain good luck—someone cancelled." The occasion was a program in memory of Callas's death in 1977, which occurred after a tumultuous career of great performances and lavishly documented fights with general managers, colleagues, and her mother. Callas saw as little of her mother as possible. "I would not give her the lice from my hair," she once said. Bartoli, however, seems to love her mother, and has given Silvana the Rolex watch she is wearing.

Both of Bartoli's parents, who have been separated for several years, are opera singers who once hoped for solo careers. But they started having children, money was tight, and they wound up taking chorus jobs at the Rome Opera. These days, Silvana often uses her maiden name, Bazzoni. Her husband, Pietro Angelo, lives by himself, in his home town of Rimini. He doesn't seem eager to keep in touch; he doesn't have a telephone. Cecilia once got him a cell phone, which he found mysteriously wonderful, until the batteries ran out. He didn't buy new ones. She sometimes visits her father, but big engagements, like this one, proceed without him. If she minds, she doesn't say.

Silvana is warming to her subject: "Did we ever think she would make such a *carriera*? I suppose not, but we did name her after Santa Cecilia, so maybe there was something." The patron saint of music, who was also Roman-born, sang with angels when she was just six, and she achieved sainthood after a short life of chastity, good works, hymn writing, and an exhausting martyrdom, which included an attempted suffocation and a failed decapitation.

Now the saint's twenty-nine-year-old namesake arrives, carrying a coffee mug and wearing her usual offstage outfit of stretch pants, sweatshirt, and sneakers, topped off by the large black bow in her hair, which she is almost never without. For her first albums and publicity shots, Bartoli dutifully put on slinky clothes and lots of lipstick, but as soon as she could afford to say no—and that wasn't long into her career—she got rid of them. Her 1989 album of Rossini arias shows her wearing trollop-red gloves, with rhinestone clumps dangling from her ears. In 1995, the album was rereleased with a cover that had been digitally transformed to give her black gloves and tiny earrings.

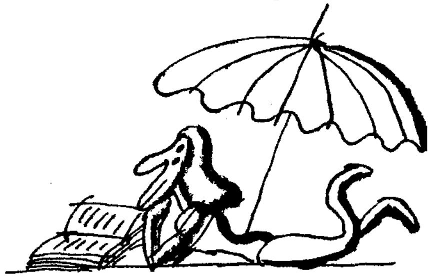
The first time I ever heard Cecilia Bartoli was on her début recording as Rosina in "Il Barbiere di Siviglia." Bartoli was just twenty-two—mature by pop standards, but startlingly young for a prima donna. I put the disk into the machine and skipped directly to Rosina's spectacular first aria, which she sings after she's been pleasantly serenaded by Count Almaviva, who is disguised as a poor but comely lad. "*Una voce poco fa*," she sings: "The voice I heard just now has thrilled me to the core."

So it was with me. In our era of trained-to-death singers, there are professionals by the dozen who can hit the tricky notes Rossini wrote. But the ones who can play with them, caress them, color them, are exceedingly rare. Here was a special voice—a smooth, glimmering truffle of a voice, astonishing in its virtuosity and range. Bartoli had something few singers have today: personality, a timbre that was all her own.

Since then, Bartoli has developed an enormous following on CDs—her recordings of Rossini and Mozart arias, among others, have made her, after Pavarotti, the most successful opera singer on disk. Her fees, of approximately fifty thousand dollars a concert, are the envy of the opera world; her small repertoire and easygoing schedule make her the target of occasional gibes. (I've heard her described as "the kid who sings two operas and twenty-four songs.") Although she likes to style herself an "anti-diva," she has picked up quite a few eccentricities that are not incompatible with the full-fledged breed. She cancels a lot of engagements. She flies only under duress, and she once pondered the logistics of taking the train to Japan—from Rome. "I need to feel the ground under my feet" is how she explains it, and although this creates logistical nightmares for her manager in New York, Jack Mastroianni, it might extend her singing days. Singers invariably step off airplanes with their vocal cords dried up and incubating their sniffling seatmate's germs. But Bartoli is simply afraid of flying, even though for a diva the chances of a mishap seem small. The last opera goddess to crash was Grace Moore, in 1947. A plane was also implicated in the death of Lina Cavalieri, another beautiful, if excessively materialistic, singer. On her way to the safety of a shelter during a Second World War bombing attack on Florence, Cavalieri remembered her jewels and traipsed back to her villa. . . .

BARTOLI is not much interested in the pool, and we've barely said hello when, swatting a mosquito, she says, "Can we please go inside?" Silvana stays outside with a crossword puzzle, and I sit down in the living room with her daughter. Tomorrow is the dress rehearsal for "La Cenerentola," which has experienced more than the usual difficulties. The opera house in Bologna absent-mindedly shipped sets for a touring version that didn't mix with the full-scale show. The result has been some additional carpentry. A scene curtain is still missing, and the cone-shaped wigs for the Prince's courtiers look as if they were dropped down by the Starship Enterprise.

I've been told that Bartoli had a wild couple of years in her mid-twenties. Now, however, she seems to have settled into a period of quiet domesticity and intense musicology with her current companion, Claudio Osele, who has just come through the living-room door. A slender man in his early thirties with slightly curly black hair and an aristocratic nose, Osele hasn't been taking well to the Houston humidity, and he has a cooked look. He often travels with Bartoli when his presence isn't required in Verona, where his family has a vineyard. He loves obscure corners of seventeenth-century and eighteenth-century music, and though he is a man of little conversation, I did once hear him hum the first movement of one of the minor symphonies of Haydn. Osele met Cecilia on her twenty-third birthday, when she was performing with the conductor Nikolaus Harnoncourt, and for several years he followed her around, bringing her bottles of wine and olive oil from the family property. Finally—every fan's dream—he got promoted.



After Osele disappears upstairs, Bartoli picks up a Metropolitan Opera season guide that includes sketches for the company's new productions. In a few months, she will make her Met début—as Despina, the maid, in a new staging of "Così Fan Tutte." She seems reassured by the conservative designs. Despina will be serving chocolate in a pretty rococo house with views out over the Bay of Naples. "No raincoat," Bartoli says darkly, recalling an updated "Così" she did a few years ago at the Salzburg Festival, in which she was obliged to wear a rain slicker that made her sweat. She got a cold and cancelled the first two performances.

I remark that a lot of people have been asking why she's singing Despina, and not the showier part of Dorabella. "I want to have some pleasure out of my début and maybe change perceptions of what is a début at the Met," she says. "Everybody goes crazy thinking about it—big place, big event. I want to have a good time. Don't you think it is possible?" Bartoli is an anxious performer who hides her nervousness well (though not well enough to have tips put on her chewed nails).

Her host, the Houston Opera's throat consultant, Richard Stasney, has just poked his head into the living room. Bartoli has a last-minute costume fitting, and Dr. Stasney sees me to my car. I ask him if there is anything special about Bartoli's vocal cords. "You know," he says, "I've looked down thousands of throats over these past twenty-five years. By themselves, what we call the vocal folds may not seem special. It's the whole resonant apparatus—wonderful breath support, a splendid resonant cavity, subtle tongue movement." With the dreamy look of someone glimpsing the lox selection at Zabar's for the first time, he describes the Bartoli larynx as it appeared through a stroboscope while she was singing bits from various arias: "We could see on the screen the entire milieu into the sinus-cavity opening. The oscillation of the folds themselves as she hit a high F was so exciting."

NEW YORK, November, 1995. One of the more astute observers of opera superstars is Herbert Breslin, a partly bald, forever tanned New York-based manager and P.R. agent, whose client list has included such legendary singers as Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Joan Sutherland, and Marilyn Horne, and whose most lucrative artist, for many years, has been Pavarotti. Breslin has an ego that's almost as finely developed as that of many of his clients, and he's famous in the opera world for delivering impromptu monologues that are nearly as vivid as a Puccini aria. To get Breslin's views on how Bartoli is shaping up as a world-class diva, I arrange to join him on the Metroliner from Penn Station to Philadelphia one morning. Our destination is the Luciano Pavarotti International Voice Competition, in Philadelphia, which the tenor judges every few years.

Conversations with Breslin tend to be one-sided, so I settle into my seat and let the aria wash over me. "Do you realize that there is not one soprano in the world today who has captured the public imagination?" he begins, warming up. "Kiri is pretty much out of it. She plays golf. Jessye Norman? She's a caricature. You can't take her seriously these days. Now, take your Ms. Bartoli. She has talent, she has a voice. I don't know her, but she is probably an ambitious person, even though she's represented by that rival of mine who also represents Mirella Freni—not a fascinating lady." (Breslin and Jack Mastroianni, Bartoli's high-powered manager, enjoy a cool relationship. They are fighting over a proposed collaboration between a Breslin client, the Spanish pianist Alicia de Larrocha, and Bartoli. The issue—surprise—is money.)

"Artists—they are calculating, ambitious, and extremely greedy," Breslin is saying. "They carry money around their necks and they sleep with it. They have pillows to put it in. Did you know that? They have the most incredible imagination when it comes to money. Luciano showed everyone how it could be done. He changed the face of opera today and hasn't given up the art in the process. At the start, I said to him, 'If I can make you independent of everything and you can decide what you want to do and when and how, then that is the greatest achievement I could make.' Nobody in the tenor world has Luciano's sound—that Italian sound. In a fat body, but it doesn't matter. Domingo would have to go pray in seventeen churches in Guadalajara to find that sound."

I am about to say that the painfully aging Pavarotti might want to pray in seventy-one churches in Modena to find some of Plácido Domingo's incredible stamina, but Breslin hasn't stopped for air. "In my thirty-five years in music," he says, "there have been few great singers I've had nothing to do with. Leontyne Price was one, and that was, I think, her mistake. And Maria Callas, whose record company has succeeded in making people think she is still alive. Who is the Pavarotti of this generation? There is none. No, not Bartoli, because she doesn't sing the bread-and-butter repertoire. She can't sing Mimì, she can't sing Tosca or Violetta, and she can't sing Aida, Manon Lescaut, or Desdemona. . . . What did you say? Rosina? Are you crazy or something? Bartoli's a specialty singer. You can't build an opera house around someone who sings 'The Barber of Seville,' 'Cenerentola,' Despina. Big, big, big things don't happen to little Despina."

Breslin pauses to look out the window at a barren wintry landscape that seems to speak to his mood. At Princeton, we pick up a clutch of noisy bureaucrats heading for Washington. Two of them spread out in the rows in front of us and begin talking loudly about tax reform. "Christ," Breslin hisses, "no wonder this country's in a mess." He leans over and taps the smaller bureaucrat on the shoulder. "Could you keep your voice down?" he says loudly. "We're having trouble with our own conversation." They're startled enough to stop yelling about marginal rates for the next few miles.

Satisfied, Breslin continues: "You and I are a generation apart. You name a protagonist of an opera and I'll tell

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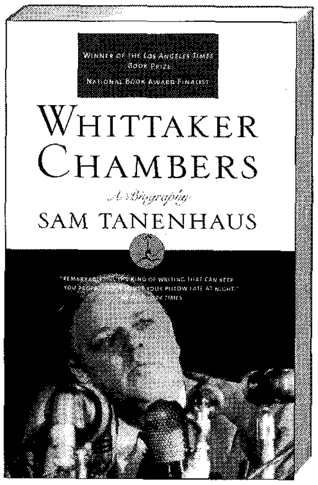

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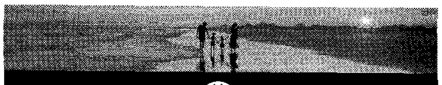

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you who I heard. Aida: Mme. Nilsson, Tebaldi, Milanov, Price—that's just four off the top. You cannot find anyone today who is even in the shadow of these people. And Radames? Richard Tucker, Corelli, Mario Del Monaco, Carlo Bergonzi. And I am just talking about artists who made opera tick. Today, directors make opera tick, or they think they do. I think it's just marking time."

A pause for breath, then Breslin launches into another favorite topic: the cluelessness of the potentially important singer who has nobody to trust. In no time, such a person will fall off the pedestal and nobody will care. As a case in point, he cites Aprile Millo, an appealingly eccentric American soprano whose high notes have begun to go, along with her career.

"Long ago," Breslin says, "the Met had a serious coaching staff. At some point, Levine"—the Met's artistic director, James Levine—"should have said, 'Aprile, get in here, honey. We have to work.' But there's no money there. What's she gonna do, pay him fifty bucks an hour? Yet they have—what?—over a thousand people who work in the Metropolitan! Where's the artistic department of the Met? I call it the autistic department." He laughs so uproariously that he begins gasping for air. People on the train are staring at us. Breslin ignores them. "Nobody cared much about protecting Millo. 'If you succeed, it's us; if you fail, it's because you're a talentless twit.' C'mon. The art of singing opera is a very involved and complicated thing."

He begins talking about his first major client, the Prussian perfectionist Elisabeth Schwarzkopf. "Schwarzkopf had more than voice and looks. She had preparation, and she surrounded herself with the best conductors. Was she a nice person? She was an extremely guarded lady, greatly intelligent, very careful. Now when I go to Germany and look at all the people attentively attending concerts and being very civilized and polite, I say to myself, 'What happened? How could a country like this have bought into a philosophy of destruction and become marketers of poison?' "

Breslin is having a Weltanschauung moment and not enjoying it. He picks at the remains of a doughnut with the defeated air of an aging Roman emperor. "I worry about the world," he says. "You worry about Cecilia Bartoli and the world is going to hell. She can't even sing a Mozart song in German. I'm not talking about her talent. She's doing very well. But I wouldn't want to put on her shoulders being the next Pavarotti. Talent is everything. . . . Are you awake? There is today a very serious threat to talent. . . ."

Screeching brakes and a seismic jolt wake me up as we arrive in Philadelphia.

NEW YORK, January, 1996. Ideally, Despina should be at the Met, rehearsing for her début in three weeks. But Despina is in bed, in Rome. Just after Christmas, Bartoli went to London to record "Orfeo ed Euridice," Haydn's little-known treatment of that most serviceable of operatic stories. It rained; she caught a cold and flew home without completing her part.

Thursday passes, then the weekend. Despina is still in Rome. The longer she stays there, the grumpier the "Così" crew is getting, as they rehearse under Lesley Koenig, the increasingly frustrated director. A strange, sophisticated opera, at once comic and disturbing, "Così" is complicated to stage. The problem of tone is tricky—particularly at the end, when the two sisters, Fiordiligi and Dorabella, realize that they've been duped by their fiancés and must decide whether or not to return to their original partners. Mozart and his librettist, Lorenzo Da Ponte, left the matter ambiguously open.

For some thoughts on the subject, I call up the British director Jonathan Miller, who has staged "Così" all over Europe—once with Bartoli as Dorabella—and is currently in town for his production of Monteverdi's "L' Incoronazione di Poppea," at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. It's snowing, and he arrives at my apartment wrapped in a bulky winter coat, looking as if he's gone missing from a hunting scene by Brueghel. He looks darkly at my beagle, Frieda, and tells me that he's recovering from a difficult experience—a production of "La Bohème" at the Bastille Opera, in Paris, with Roberto Alagna as Rodolfo. The young tenor, who is being aggressively marketed as "the Fourth Tenor" by his recording company, EMI, has been constantly in the news—all the more now that he has found comfort in the thin

"Expressions of support for your attempted suicide keep pouring in."

arms of Angela Gheorghiu, a lyric soprano from Romania, known as Vampira to her colleagues. For the "Bohème" in Paris, Alagna arrived late for rehearsals, Miller reports. Meanwhile, Gheorghiu amused herself miming Mimì's music from the wings while another Romanian, Leontina Vaduva, went through the bother of singing it.

"I've been watching the Alagna effect," Miller says. "The acute pressures of fame are much greater now, because the fame is so sudden and intense. And this imposes on young people an explosive decompression that leads to psychological problems in the best of them. They get nitrogen bubbles in the soul. The combined effects of greedy agents, greedy recording administrators, equally greedy magazine journalists and editors for charismatic covers all come together and have a dangerous impact on young people who have not experienced fame. In the opera world, fortune is capriciously scattered around. In the theatre, this doesn't really exist. There's no prodigious peculiarity of the voice which marks you out. My experience of working with singers is that it's rather like working in an Olympic Village with rather peculiar athletes."

Miller pauses to inspect a gnawed slipper presented by Frieda. I bring him to the subject of "Così" and its problematic ending. "The last time I staged the show, at Covent Garden," he says, "everyone ended up hating everyone. There were no couples at the end. In my previous productions, I stuck to the eighteenth century."

"You mean, order must be restored?"

"They must go back. That's the whole point—honor must be preserved and you must live with your mistakes."

He asks, "Who's in the show?" I tell him that Bartoli is making her début. "Wonderful actress," he says. "Well, wonderful if encouraged by a good stage director. She sang Dorabella and it was really very good."

I mention that Bartoli is singing Despina. "Really!" he says. "Now, that seems rather odd—like using a sledgehammer to crack nuts. Anyway, in Florence she wasn't a great star yet. She was just on the edge, with all these contracts coming her way. Very fresh. Blooming. Enormously attractive and like some wonderful, beautifully made piece of confectionery."

A WEEK passes—still no Bartoli. I call up Jonathan Friend, loyal deputy to James Levine, who is conducting "Così." Is the Met going to demand a doctor's note? Friend laughs. "What for? First of all, we believe she really is sick. After all, she also cancelled a recording session. And, anyway, Italian doctors—well, you know they are known for handing sick notes to pink-cheeked singers who've double-booked themselves or just don't want to bother." He mentions an Italian diva who was seen in Las Vegas after she'd cancelled a Met show with a doctor's note. She got fired.

Slowly, the rehearsals peter out for lack of a Despina. I call Carol Vaness, who is singing Fiordiligi and is known to speak her mind. "This has got to be the longest-running case of bronchitis in medical history," she jokes. When I ask how she likes the show, Vaness says, "Right now, I would say that it has about the comic touch and bounce of a serial killer." She excuses herself for a moment, then comes back on the line. "That was the Met," she says. "Miss Despina is coming in on the Concorde tomorrow."

Rehearsals at the Met take place in underground rooms that look like bomb shelters from the Sputnik era. Two weeks before the opening, the atmosphere gets hectic as the show migrates to the main stage, where the tenor is usually standing in the wrong place.

But the Met's new "Così" seems to be going smoothly now that Bartoli has been buttoned into her costume and is waiting in her dressing room for the first run-through with the orchestra. Stagehands are pulling the set into place—an elegant contraption outfitted with sliding doors and an invisible system of trolleys that will allow Don Alfonso and Despina to move the scenery around as they move the plot along. It's a nice conceit.

Lesley Koenig, the director, is standing in the center aisle conferring with Duane Schuler, a lighting designer on loan from the Lyric Opera of Chicago. Vaness saunters cheerfully down the

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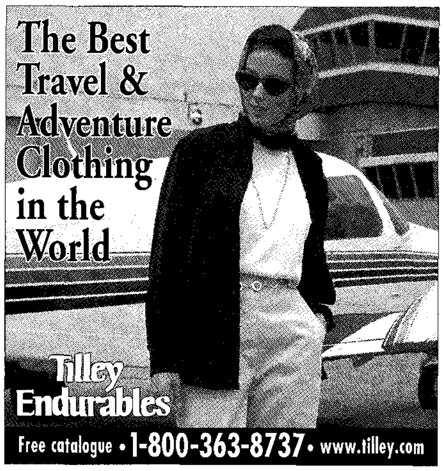

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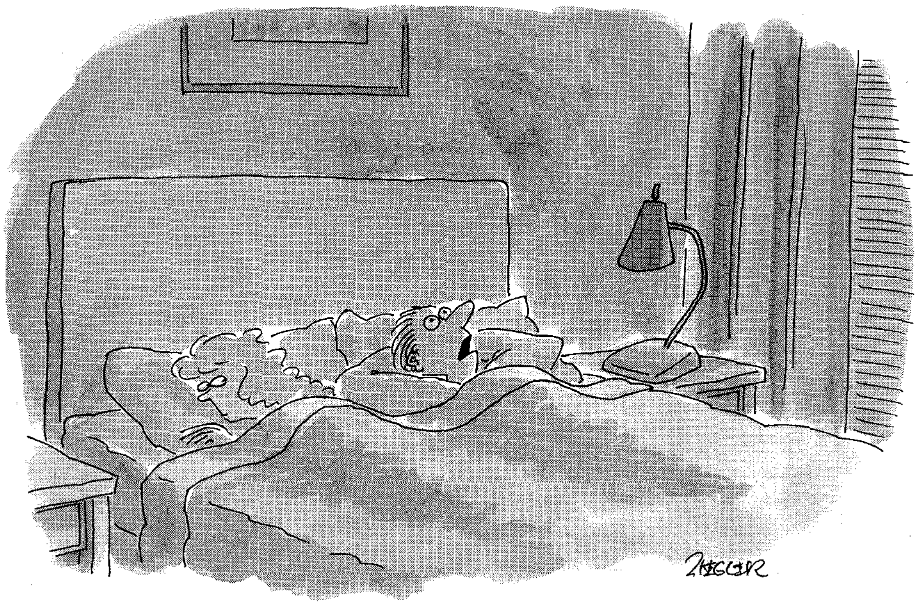

"Gee, but I miss the heightened eroticism of those five and a half years of conjugal visits."

• •

aisle, taps Schuler on the shoulder, and tells him, "I have only one thing to say to you: more peach lighting!" Schuler gives her a fond squeeze, and replies, "That's what you all say." Peach, he explains to me, makes everyone look younger.

Vaness continues down the aisle, waving grandly to retainers. While everyone watches in amusement, she lies down on the prompter's box and, winking like Marlene Dietrich, slowly raises one long and limber leg into the air. "And this," she purrs, "is the way I will sing 'Per pietà.' "

Despina is usually first seen whipping chocolate into a fine froth for her demanding mistresses, Fiordiligi and Dorabella, who come running in to announce their decision to kill themselves because their boyfriends have gone off to the field of battle. But this Despina makes a different appearance: she brings the entire kitchen and the entire house with her. Her back bent over in mock exertion, Bartoli slowly pulls the house behind her on a long rope. Funny and surprising, it's a spectacular entrance.

But singers are rarely pleased. "What's not to like?" I ask a glum Bartoli during a break, as we find seats in the Met cafeteria. I've heard that she was somewhat frostily received by the cast once she finally got off the Concorde and showed up at the Met. Was that the problem? No, she says, without elaborating much. Offstage, getting Bartoli to let go is sometimes like throwing money into the ocean to open a bank account.

The production's three young assistant directors, Robin Guarino, Paula Williams, and Peter McClintock, approach. "Listen, dears," Bartoli says, addressing the adoring trio. "I have a problem. My accent. What should I do?" Bartoli is talking about the fraudulent-marriage scene in which Despina is disguised as the fuddy-duddy notary. In most productions, the notary lisps or sings through the nose in an attempt to be amusing. "I want to try something different," Bartoli says.

"Why don't you try talking Italian like an American?" Guarino suggests. She offers me as an example. "How about Winnie Klotz?" Williams puts in, diplomatically. Klotz, the Met's house photographer, turns English into Italian by adding "io" endings. For example, "crossword" becomes "crosswordio."

Bartoli glows. "Hmm. It's very good, I think," she says, absorbing the concept. "What an idea."

OPENING NIGHT: The Met's gold curtain closes for the last time; it's pandemonium around Bartoli. Bouquets have sailed across the orchestra pit and are piled up at her feet. Fifteen minutes later, there is a line outside her dressing room which extends all the way down the corridor to the stage door. I head upstairs, for the cast dinner in the Grand Tier restaurant. Joseph Volpe, the Met's general manager, is standing guard at the entrance with Bruce Crawford, the president and C.E.O. of the Metropolitan Opera Association.

Both men are in good spirits: sold-out signs, no screwups, no boos. They look as if they might break into a soft-shoe and shuffle any minute. Crawford turns to his sidekick with an expression of mock anxiety. "Say, Jimmy's gala," he says, bringing up the highly fraught subject of an all-star evening, scheduled for the next April, celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of James Levine's arrival at the Met. "Is it really true that it's going to be longer than 'Götterdämmerung'?"

"Oh, definitely. At least!" Volpe snickers.

"Makes you want to get a syringe with the flu virus," Crawford says.

Bartoli arrives with Claudio Osele and Jack Mastroianni. "Well, I guess we proved it," Mastroianni is saying. "All those people who said your voice was too small for the Met—I guess they heard you."

"Say, Cecilia," someone asks, "what's happening with the Pope?"

Bartoli has acquired a new fan, who has expressed the hope that she will give a concert in the Sistine Chapel. Decca is hoping to turn the event into a CD and possibly a video. Such a concert would boost Bartoli's presence in Italy, where she is not yet particularly well known—in part, because she has scarcely sung there, though she seems oblivious of the connection.

"What did the Pope's people say to you?" she is asked.

"They wanted to know my views on abortion," she says.

"So what did you tell them?"

Bartoli shrugs. "I said, 'I like children and hope to have a few someday.' That seemed to satisfy them. They just don't want someone who sings in the Sistina to go on television making controversy."

"Smart girl."

NEW YORK, October, 1997. Bartoli and I are having lunch across from Lincoln Center a few days before the opening night of her second appearance at the Met, in "La Cenerentola." I have just witnessed a quavering Pavarotti's sad attempt to sing the opera that goes with "Nessun dorma," and I ask if she is planning to sing Cenerentola when she's sixty. She laughs. "Women go through menopause—you know that," she says. "Let's go a little slowly here. What's that old saying? *Festina lente.* Make haste slowly. I like that. This last year was not good."

The only offer she has accepted at the Met is Jonathan Miller's new production of "Le Nozze di Figaro," for the fall of 1998. It will be her first Susanna, a role that is usually cast with a lyric soprano. Another soprano heroine, Debussy's Mélisande, is also on the horizon.

Is Bartoli changing voice categories? She shakes her head, and says that she views the outing, planned for the 1999 Maggio Musicale—the annual May festival in Florence—as part of a strategic return to her European roots (and to the excellent European train network).

PERHAPS it could use a bit more fairy dust, but "La Cenerentola" putters along smoothly and cheerfully when it opens, on October 16th. The show is both charming and, at times, disturbingly dark. Cenerentola toils in a large room dominated by an orange sofa missing a leg and by an outsized fireplace that underscores the weariness of her cinder-sweeping existence.

"*Una volta c'era un re,*" Bartoli sings again, shining shoes as the opera opens—"Once upon a time, there was a king." When Alidoro, the Prince's emissary, knocks on the door, she hastens past her two hissing sisters, stopping to adjust her cap and make sure she looks as good as possible. It's a nice touch. You never know who might come calling, so look your best! The happy ending is complete with a wedding cake that fills the stage and is topped off by Cenerentola and the Prince.

"I was born to sorrow and tears," Bartoli sings, climbing down the frosted tiers for her signature aria. "I suffered with a silent heart. But by some sweet enchantment, in the flower of my youth, swift as a flash of lightning, my fortune changed."

She pauses for a minute to forgive her shuffling stepfather and stepsisters, cheerfully forking cake into their low-slung jaws. Then, all those on stage sing, "You are a goddess worthy of the throne," and she thanks them for their excellent judgment with a perfectly launched rocket of glistening coloratura.

NOT long after opening night, I drop in on Jack Mastroianni at his office. Bartoli is off doing a good deed—a free gala for the financially strapped Montreal Symphony, as a favor to its conductor, Charles Dutoit, who hired her at the start of her career, in 1990.

The phone rings.

"What!" Mastroianni says, turning the color of death. "Wait, don't do anything. Just let me think. I'll call you back. Where are you?"

It is Bartoli, calling from her cell phone. The chauffeur, who had driven down from Montreal during the night to pick her up in New York, apparently got so sleepy that he began weaving along the highway. She's forced him to pull over. Now she and Claudio are somewhere on the New York Thruway, near Albany.

There goes that concert, I think. This girl really has trouble with transportation.

The phone rings again. Bartoli is back on her portable. "You're going to drive the limo? Are you crazy?" Mastroianni says. He clicks off and calls someone in Montreal. Then he calls Bartoli. "You can't drive the limo," he tells her. "You need to have a chauffeur's license and insurance. . . . An airport near Albany? You want to *fly*?"

No, she doesn't want to fly. They're going to wake the driver, make him find the airport, and leave him there to sleep while they rent a car.

"O.K.," Mastroianni says. "Sounds . . . well, sounds good. Do you know where Montreal is?"

No, they don't. Somewhere north and to the right.

Three hours later, the phone rings again. It's Bartoli. "We're near the border," she says, so loudly that I can hear her across the office. "We're on our way!" ♦

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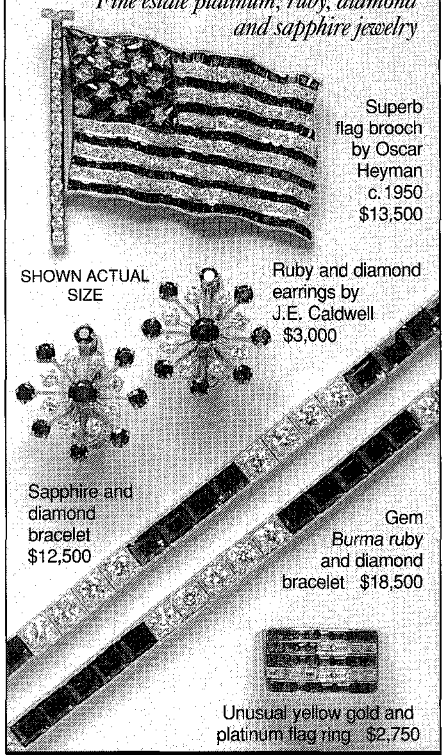

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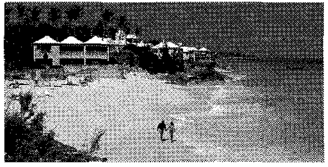

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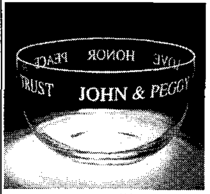

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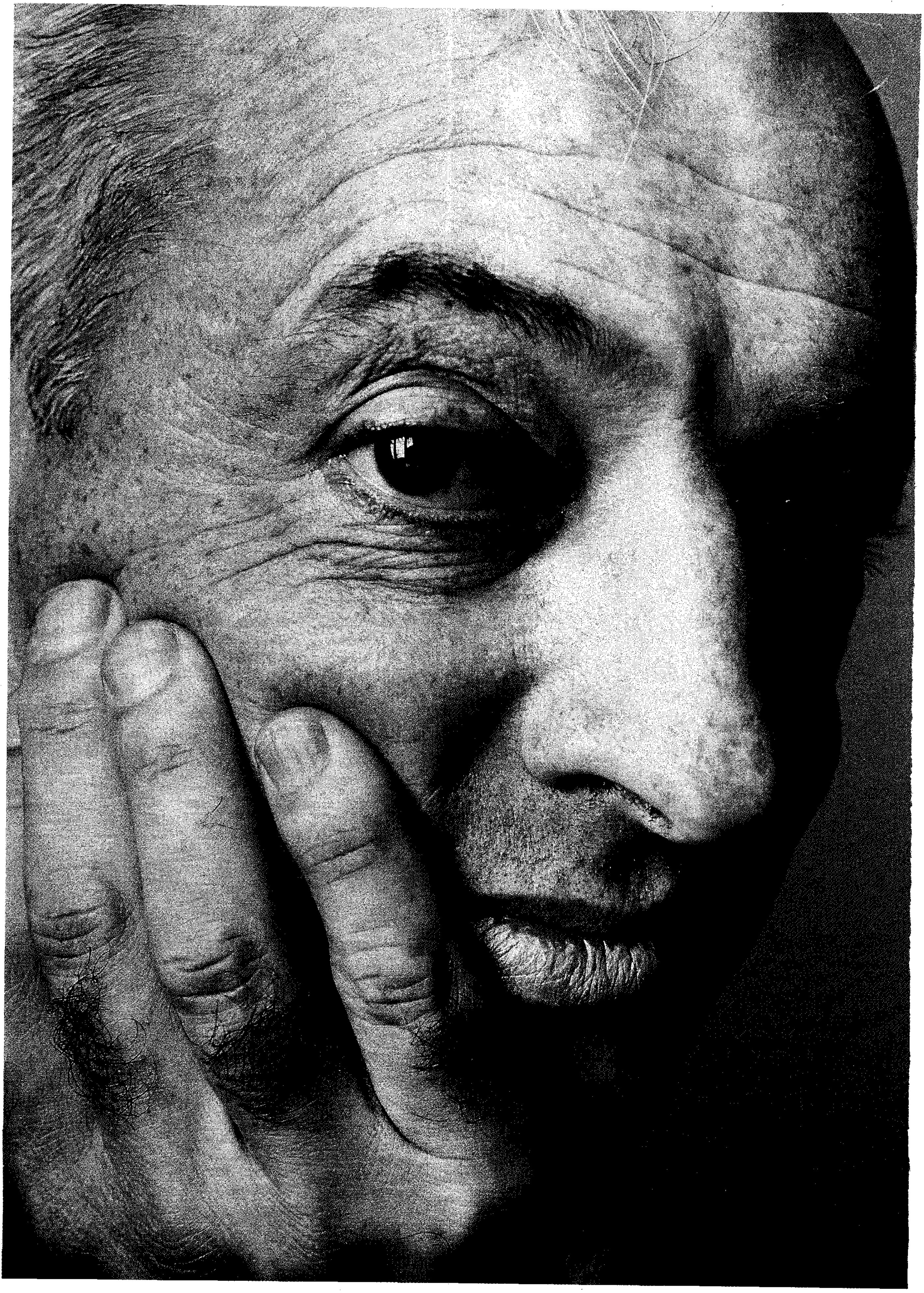

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LIFE AND LETTERS

THE USES OF MISERY

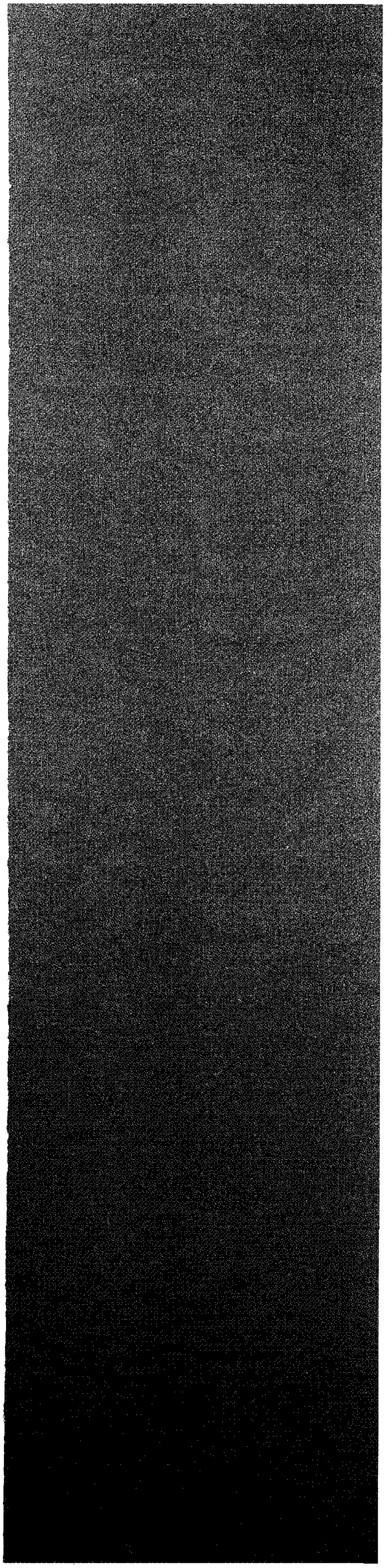
Each of Saul Bellow's novels is, in some way, a response to a dire event in his life. When his wife had an affair with his best friend, a masterpiece followed.

BY JAMES ATLAS

THE iconic Saul Bellow, the one we know best, is the dapper figure who adorned the cover of *Newsweek* in 1975, the year before he won the Nobel Prize. Arms crossed, in a well-tailored suit, he was elegant but also emblematic of hardboiled Chicago, the turf he made his own in a series of novels, now stretching over half a century, that earned him the rank of America's foremost novelist—the writer, as John Updike once put it in these pages, who "has sat atop the American literary heap longer than anyone else since William Dean Howells."

Writers' images tend to become fixed in our minds at a late stage of their careers—the triumphant stage, when they've reached the pinnacle of fame. The spectacled James Joyce in his velvet smoking jacket, the bearded, ruddy-faced outdoorsman Ernest Hemingway: the truth, as we all know, is infinitely more complicated. In his indigent days, when he was a bank clerk in Rome, Joyce wore a tailcoat to conceal the patches in his trousers; Hemingway's outward heartiness belied his long struggle with alcohol, with four wives, with inner demons that he never managed to vanquish (and that culminated in his suicide). Bellow, too, arrived at his apogee via a circuitous route. The literary lion, showered with every prize, survived a childhood in the Jewish slums of Montreal so impoverished that he and his brothers all slept in one bed, a scrappy youth in Depression Chicago, and a wearying literary apprenticeship, in which he weathered years of equivocal reviews and thin sales. (His first two novels, "Dangling Man" and "The Victim," each sold fewer than six thousand copies.) Bellow applied for a Guggenheim fellowship three times before he got one; he was so hard up in 1951, when he was thirty-six, that he appealed to the Rockefeller Foundation for a grant, only to be turned away with a stony letter of rejection. It wasn't until "The Adventures of Augie March," in 1953, that he established his literary reputation; another eleven years would pass before he achieved the wealth and fame that the swaggering personae of his later novels—Charlie Citrine, in "Humboldt's Gift," Dean Albert Corde, in "The Dean's December," the famous botanist Benn Crader, in "More Die of Heartbreak"—take for granted. Like Tommy Wilhelm, the crushed and hapless hero of the 1956 "Seize the Day" (if "hero" is the word for an overweight, chain-smoking, separated father who throws away his last nickel in a single bad day of speculating on the stock market), Bellow in his mid-forties was more acquainted with disappointment than with praise.

Even by the standards of our confessional age, Bellow sticks close to the facts in his work; one can reliably trace his career by reading his novels in sequence. Of course, we can't read them as exact indicators of biographical truth—"You are confusing fact with fiction," he wrote me sternly when, in the course of my biographical research, I applied a detail from one of his novels to his life—but they follow its general outline, and certainly its spirit. The stormy marriages and problems with women; the effort to reconcile a penchant for dreaming with the harsh realities of capitalist America; the "Chicago states of mind" that seize his brainy, excitable protagonists: no one familiar with the lineaments of Bellow's biography can fail to recognize him in these charged self-portraits. He likes to quote Alberto Moravia's axiom that fic-



PHOTOGRAPH BY IRVING PENN

The essence of the man: Bellow had a talismanic belief in his powers of creativity.

tion is a higher form of autobiography. What could you reveal about me, he once challenged the writer Mark Harris (another prospective biographer), that I haven't already revealed about myself?

Each book not only contains the essence of the man but captures, however obliquely, the spirit of its age. "Dangling Man," Bellow's 1944 début, about a Hyde Park intellectual awaiting draft induction, brilliantly reflected the climate of moral despair that presided over wartime America; Edmund Wilson called it "one of the most honest pieces of testimony on the psychology of a whole generation to have grown up during the depression and the war." "The Victim," published three years later, grappled with the aftermath of the Holocaust. And with "Augie," his book about a young man's coming of age in Chicago, Bellow set himself an even larger task. "Bellow was not one of the family's own only because he was a Jewish intellectual," Norman Podhoretz explained in "Making It," invoking in Mafia terms the closeness and insularity of the New York intellectuals who clustered around *Partisan Review* and *Commentary* in the nineteen-forties and fifties. "He also spoke for and embodied the impulse . . . to lay a serious claim to their identity as Americans and to their right to play a more than marginal role in the literary culture of the country." Bellow was the family's "White Hope," Podhoretz asserted: "There was a sense in which the validity of a whole phase of American experience was felt to hang on the question of whether or not he would turn out to be a great novelist." If anyone could bring Jewish literature into the American mainstream, it would be Saul Bellow.

THERE was nothing abstract about his quest. In the fall of 1953, just as he was making his name with "Augie," Bellow was preparing to embark on the romantic misadventure that would provide the basis for his most famous and arguably his best novel, "Herzog": his marriage to Sondra Tschacbasov, and her affair with his best friend, Jack Ludwig. A significant part of Bellow's genius is his ability to capitalize on his experience, to find in circumstances that would defeat a less hearty or resourceful soul the materials of his art. Each of his books is, in its own way, a response to some dire event in his life; he rallies against crisis—a friend's death, a near-breakdown, more usually a divorce—by writing a novel. Bellow's life trajectory is cyclical: out of misery, triumph; out of triumph, misery—an exhausting but exalted dialectic.

The publication of "The Adventures of Augie March" marked the beginning of one of these cycles. Having "established his beachhead," as Harvey Breit, the assistant editor of the *Times Book Review*, characterized the early stages of Bellow's career, he was now "successfully fanning out into the broader and brighter domains." An interview with Bellow by Breit, which appeared in the *Book Review* the week of "Augie" 's publication, gave the public its first glimpse of the man: "He will talk on the most abstruse or delicate or complex subjects in a matter-of-fact, even breezy colloquial. What he renders unto Caesar is public, what he renders unto God is a strictly private matter." Breit was impressed by Bellow's modesty, the ease with which he abjured "the over-solemn, the too-pious manner, the inflated ego," and "made his momentous novel seem casual," or, to borrow one of Augie's terms, a lark. Bellow told Breit, "I kicked over the traces, wrote catch-as-catch-can, picaresque. I took my chance."

Bellow didn't indulge in the kind of risk-taking that many of his contemporaries did—alcohol, or the open road of Kerouac and the Beats; in his personal habits, Bellow was moderate, very much a Flaubertian bourgeois. But when it came to questions of where to live or whom to marry or how to earn a living, he was prepared to call upon the fates. Another of his favorite axioms, invoked at decisive moments in his life, was "God will provide." Like Augie, he would "go at things as I have taught myself, free-style."

On the campus of Bard College, where Bellow was teaching—and experiencing a period of eventful bachelorhood following the breakup of his first marriage, to his college sweetheart, Anita Goshkin—"Augie" suddenly made him a figure of considerable renown. "Trailing clouds of glorious reviews, he was like the champion prizefighter who could not walk into a saloon without being challenged by local toughs," Al Ellenberg, a former student, remembered. In a *Rolling Stone* profile, Ellenberg described how freshmen crowded into Bellow's American-literature classes out of curiosity, "only to be put off by his monologic dissertations on Melville and Hawthorne." Another Bard student, Michael Rubin, offered a vivid impression of Bellow in a novel of academic life, entitled "A Trip into Town," which featured a womanizing professor by the name of Leon Kossoff. Kossoff, who has just published a successful novel "about confused Jews liberating themselves," is a distinctly Bellovian figure; Suki, a student who becomes his lover, applies to him the adjective "gorgeous." Rubin wrote, "His face, despite the ill-considered addition of the writer's pipe, was as finely delineated as Michelangelo's Apollo playing Jesus Christ in the Sistine Chapel. The arrogantly winged nose, the sensitive, fully sculptured mouth braced by a strong chin were compellingly handsome."

At Bard, there were plenty of Sukis, but Bellow avoided involvements with students. "He was sensitive and gentle, considering that young women with crushes were a dime a dozen," one undergraduate recalled. In any case, Sondra, who was his steady girlfriend at the time, was usually staying with him. "Saul and Sondra entertained wonderfully," according to the poet Anthony Hecht, a frequent guest at Saturday-night dinner parties in an apartment that Bellow had rented above the tractors and boats in Chanler Chapman's carriage house. (Chapman, the son of the historian John Jay Chapman, found his way into a Bellow novel, as the manic and grandiose hero of "Henderson the Rain King.") "Greenwich Village-in-the-fields," as Bellow sardonically termed the place, attracted a number of lively characters. There was Keith Botsford, a self-consciously raffish novelist with a taste for sports cars and Bennington girls, who claimed to be a descendant of Machiavelli and became Bellow's lifelong friend. And there was Jack Ludwig, a red-haired Canadian who hobbled about campus in a thick-soled shoe; he became the kind of friend that Bellow liked to call a "soul mate." Ludwig, a flamboyant figure on the Bard campus, suffered from crippling gout in one leg, which he propped up on a footstool with Johnsonian pomp. He had recently completed his Ph.D. at U.C.L.A., and he considered himself a great Joycean and an accomplished Yiddishist. He and Bellow met at a party in Bellow's carriage house at the beginning of the term, when Ludwig was trying out his Yiddish. At a literary conference soon afterward, he stood up and addressed a question to the author of "The Adventures of Augie March," calling it "the greatest twentieth-century American novel."

While Bellow revelled in the attention his book had brought him, Sondra was feeling left out. "I didn't have a lot to do, and I wasn't happy there," she told me. Though she was mostly at Bard that fall, she also shared an apartment in the city with Pearl Kazin, who had sublet her brother Alfred's apartment while he was spending a sabbatical year at Smith. For Sondra, having a place of her own served a purpose: details of Bellow's divorce from his first wife, Anita, were still being ironed out, and he didn't want her lawyers to know that he was living with another woman.

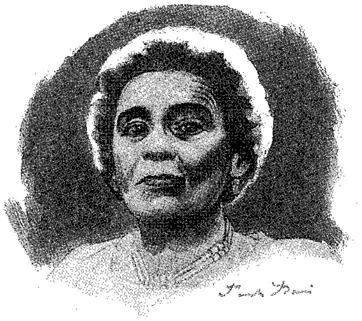
Not that Bellow was in any hurry to settle down again. In the winter of 1953, he moved to a temporary place on the Upper West Side and camped out at a friend's house when he had to be at Bard. The nomadic life suited him, and for once in his life Bellow had some money; Pascal Covici, his editor at Viking, sent him a royalty check for five thousand dollars. Then, early in the new year, he learned that "Augie" had won the National Book Award for the most distinguished American novel of 1953.

Bellow's good fortune was evident to his friends. Delmore Schwartz noted of a visit that winter, "Saul and Sondra arrived—very happy & looking very well—Saul looked much younger, not heavy & drawn." The poet Louis Simpson was also struck by his exuberance. When Simpson was visiting friends in Greenwich Village one night, Bellow strode in with a briefcase, his overcoat sprinkled with snow. He had just given a lecture at the New School, and was in a state of high excitement—not over his lecture, it turned out, but because he'd just had a showdown with a critic, who had followed him up the street afterward trying to pick a fight. Goaded to the breaking point, Bellow had turned around and swung his briefcase at the critic. "He was exhilarated," Simpson wrote. "There is nothing like opposition, driving a man against the wall, to make him believe in the reality of his ideas."

Bellow's high-spirited competitiveness was charming. When he and Alfred

LETTER • REBECCA WEST

HELL AT HOME



In 1912, Rebecca West lampooned H. G. Wells in a famous essay; Wells retaliated by seducing his critic. The affair produced a son, Anthony. In 1955, after running off to New York and leaving his wife behind, Anthony published "Heritage," a novel that was based on his childhood. His mother, then married to the banker Henry Andrews, was appalled at her son's hostile and thinly disguised depiction of her. The incident sent her into a fury of letter writing, including this one to her friends Maboth Mosley and Vera Watson. West died in 1983.

February 5, 1956

My dear Maboth and Vera,

I have broken my promise to write to you because I have had violent bronchitis, and deafness in both ears, at the same time that Henry had to go into hospital to have a cortisone treatment for a circulatory trouble, not dangerous but tiresome.

But here is my explanation, which is very unpleasant. I have for many years had a most difficult life, because I have a most difficult family. I have a sister, to whom I am devoted, whose state has for many years caused me the gravest anxiety; and she is now in a condition which grieves me very much. She has a daughter who has from time to time got herself into scrapes which have troubled me very much. . . . But the great difficulty in my life has always been my son, to whom I have always been specially devoted, because I nearly lost him in his early teens, he was in a sanatorium for six months with a curious lung affection [*sic*]. He was a most difficult adolescent, and then he seemed to settle down, he married young and was apparently happy for years, and had two children. There was everything to make him happy. . . . For the last ten years he has been behaving in a most extraordinary manner. There has just been one inexplicable mystery after another, and a constant display of rage against me. He went to America six years ago, leaving his wife and two children here, in very strange circumstances. Subsequently his wife had to divorce him, as he never sent for her. He surrendered his private income to her but it is not enough and Henry and I have, I think, faced the situation as generously as anybody could ask. Anthony remarried, and last August brought this new wife here, and we welcomed her—and I may mention that we gave Anthony a delayed present of two hundred pounds. We saw them several times, and parted most affectionately. . . . Two months later there was published in America an appalling novel by Anthony, being [that] my name and H.G.'s [were] on the cover, which I could have borne if the story told in the novel had been true, but it is a tissue of damaging lies, told with the utmost malice. The news came to us just before we had our celebrations of our twenty-fifth anniversary, and how I got through those I do not know. I think you wrote to us. Thank you so much—I just could not cope.

It does not end with the utter heartbreak and the shock. I have countless letters about this horror, many from strangers in America. There have also been a number of serious legal difficulties to be settled, as others beside myself have been libelled. My life has been a complete hell since October. And, indeed, for a long time before that. What I would have done without Henry I cannot imagine.

The London Library is four guineas entrance fee and six guineas annual subscription. If you care to join, I will certainly have the greatest pleasure in treating you to the entrance fee and the first two years' subscriptions. You have always been so gay and friendly and such loyal, good friends, and I would like to show you some mark of affection, small though this be. But I can't offer to do it for more than two years, for I might well be dead by that time! ♦

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Kazin played violin duets, racing impulsively through Mozart's Turkish Rondo, "It was a question," said Kazin's then wife, Ann Birstein, "of who was going to win." He was an inveterate joke collector, and laughed loudest at his own jokes, throwing back his head and roaring after he delivered the punch line. He had a gift for the devastating one-liner. Of a failed novel: "He never got his characters out of immigration." To an heiress who threatened to write her memoirs: "Will you use a typewriter or an adding machine?" One day, Pearl Kazin, who regularly reviewed fiction for the quarterlies, read aloud the first sentence of Ralph de Toledano's "Day of Reckoning": "The fingers of his mind were tired." Bellow replied, "From picking his mental nose."

Bellow's wit spilled forth in his letters. "I'm in pretty good shape," he wrote to a Chicago friend, Sam Freifeld, in the spring of 1954, intimating that he hadn't given up his one vice: "investigating freedom." He had every intention of marrying Sondra as soon as he could get free of Anita. But his vow apparently didn't require fidelity. He sent Freifeld a postcard of Gloria Swanson curled up on a bed with the message "But to women I am highly susceptible."

BELLOW and Sondra were married in February of 1956, in Reno, Nevada, where he had finally managed to obtain his divorce from Anita. It was "the dead of winter," Sondra recalled, and the only guests present at their wedding were the Covicis and the Ludwigs, who had come out from New York. The service was conducted by an English rabbi who was more interested in discussing the latest issue of *Commentary* than in performing the service, after which Bellow read aloud to the assembled company from a new novel he called his "African book"; it would eventually metamorphose into "Henderson the Rain King."

At first, the marriage was calming and productive—at least for Bellow. "I am perfectly satisfied with Sondra and marriage, with the house we live in and the work I am doing," the groom reported to Sam Freifeld. "In all my life I have never stood so level. The bubble is in the middle of me." But by June the newlyweds were back East, looking for houses and unconsciously scouting scenes for "Herzog." Like his eponymous hero, Bellow had received an inheritance of around twenty thousand dollars upon his father's death, so the Bellows could afford a home of their own. Perched on a hill between the Bard campus and the Hudson, in Tivoli, New York, the house was a decrepit three-story Italianate pile—"an old Faulkner mansion that had drifted north," as Bellow described it. The house had a Charles Addams look: the grounds were overgrown, the wraparound porch on the verge of collapse. On the first floor was a grand ballroom with ornately corniced floor-length windows; the Dutch kitchen was hotel-sized; the bedrooms were high-ceilinged and grand, with sooty fireplaces. Known around town as the White Elephant, it was an impractical purchase for a novelist who had no permanent job and no fixed income. "I'm not sure I'll have enough money to keep things going," Bellow wrote to Ralph Ellison on September 7, 1956. "Plaster, paint, carpentry, taxes, fuel. But I'm not supposed to worry about these problems here. I came to work on my book." Also, the couple needed to set up house. Sondra was five months pregnant. "We're going to have a child," she had pleaded with tears in her eyes, "and we have no place to live."

"I poured my life's blood into that place," Bellow recalled in an interview with Keith Botsford, "hammering and sawing, scraping and painting, digging and planting and weeding until I felt like a caretaker in my own cemetery. So that as I mowed the grass I would think, Here I will be buried by the fall." All through the summer he labored; in August, the well gave out. "We may have to drill a new one (another 1,000 down the hole, literally)," Bellow wrote a friend. "Oh, well, Pa didn't *really* think I could hold on to his legacy."

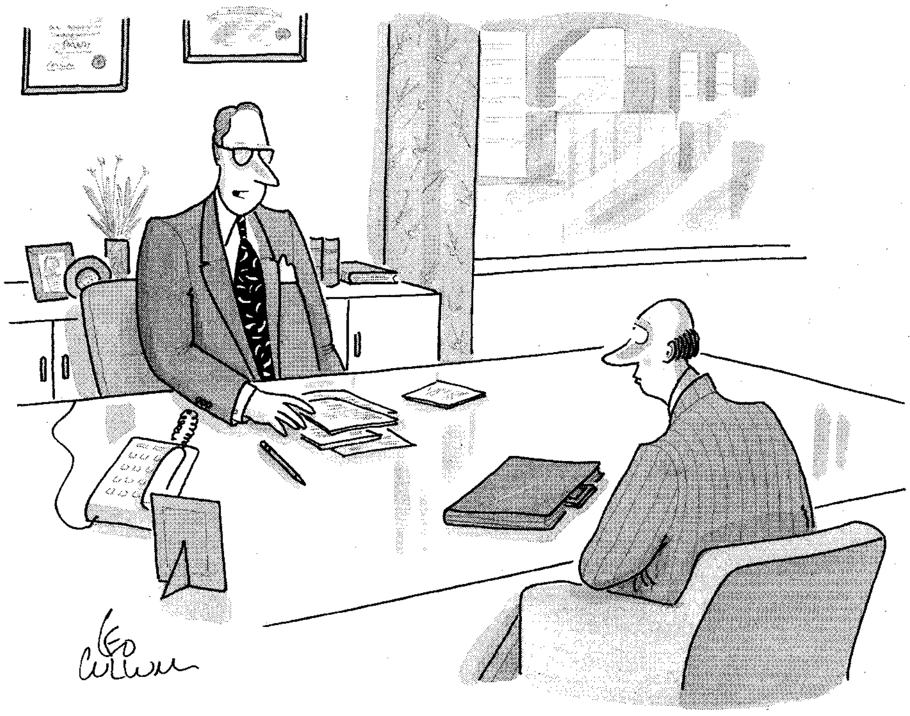
"It was not a good idea to buy that house," Sondra admitted. "It was my fault: I had a nesting instinct." But country living wasn't her style. A self-proclaimed "city girl," she bridled at the rigors of homemaking in the wilds of Dutchess County: as she put it, "I'm accustomed to a janitor." Like Madeleine, the wife in "Herzog," she was haughty and high-strung. "Her parents are Russian Jews, but she preferred to say that she was Russian," Bellow noted unkindly in a passage later deleted from "Herzog." "It wasn't till I met them that I realized they were also Jews." Sondra considered the Tschacbasovs a cut above the Bellows, who were working-class Russian immigrants. She was scathing about Bellow's brother Maurice, "a big fat pig of a vulgar man," whose apartment on Goethe Street (Maurice pronounced it "Go-e-thee") had a mural of an Italian scene on the wall. But she was also ambivalent about her own family. A child of bohemia, Sondra had grown to resent her father's Greenwich Village crowd—poets and painters who hung around his studio in the Chelsea Hotel. "My wife had *had* it with artists," Bellow said. At an artist's party in Evanston, Sondra glumly announced, "I hate painters."

Sondra's affair with Jack Ludwig began at Bard. He was living nearby with his wife, Leah, and their first child, and the two couples were inseparable: Hudson Valley versions of D. H. and Frieda Lawrence and Katherine Mansfield and John Middleton Murry, the tempestuous literary quartet whose complex friendship formed the basis for "Women in Love." Leah was "a sweet, mouselike person," a friend of the Ludwigs' recalled. "She was the housewife, he was the literary lion." Sondra was also married to a literary lion, but she herself cut a considerable figure. With her bold blue eyes, black hair piled regally at the back of her head, and bracelets jangling on her wrist, Sondra could be formidable, even intimidating. "There was a kind of Artemis quality about Sasha, a rigidity and purity," said Bellow's Bard colleague Ted Hoffman, who described her as both "challenging" and "seraphic." Hoffman's wife, Lynn, likened her to the Snow Maiden of Russian folklore, "all fur and dangling earrings." She had scholarly aspirations, and later began researching a doctoral thesis on the idea of divine right in the Byzantine era.

The deepest bond wasn't between husbands and wives, or husbands and lovers; it was between Ludwig and Bellow. They had much in common—literary ambition, nostalgia for their Jewish-immigrant roots, a fondness for company. More important, Ludwig idolized Bellow. An aspiring novelist himself, Ludwig had published here and there, but he hadn't really made a mark. His only book so far was an anthology called "Stories, British and American," which he had co-edited with the critic Richard Poirier. As a teacher, he got mixed reviews. The historian and critic Peter Shaw, a student of his at Bard, said that Ludwig was "a great name-dropper" but could be an inspiring teacher, even if "a lot of it was fakery." At parties, he sang with willed gusto—a *tummler*, as one of his colleagues described him, meaning someone who stirred things up, a noisemaker. Ludwig lectured Bellow during their long country walks, dispensing "avuncular" homilies about how to operate in the conjugal bed, according to a member of their circle: "Jack was offering amorous advice on how to please a woman. Meanwhile he was sleeping with Bellow's wife."

BELLOW got to a point in every book, he confided to one of his girlfriends, where he had to "tear up his life." It wasn't a conscious policy—more a matter of encouraging conditions in which chaos could flourish. He "thrived on adversity," he noted; and as "Henderson" gathered steam, so did the climate that he seemed to find ideal for composition. While he was holed up in his sunny workroom in Tivoli, charting the adventures of Henderson in Africa, the domestic drama that would furnish his next novel was unfolding a good deal closer to home. Life at Tivoli was like something out of a novel by Tolstoy, a visitor noted. Sondra's background, her nickname—Sasha—and Bellow's habit of addressing his friends in the Russian manner ("Dear Yevgeny Pavlovitch") contributed to the dacha-like feel of the place, as did the piney woods around the house. Bellow even bemoaned his "Russian lack of organization." Like all writers, he needed a certain amount of solitude in order to work, yet he was gregarious by nature. For a person who campaigned tirelessly against distraction, he had a high tolerance for it—indeed, deliberately sought it out. He liked stimulation: teaching at the New School and writing his lectures on the train in from Rhinecliff ("Motion stirs my sometimes sluggish imagination"); entertaining Ralph Ellison and Gore Vidal in his "manorial" Hudson Valley estate. At odd hours, he retreated to his desk and wrote. "That g.-d. book," also known as "Africa," was "going strong again."

Bellow was "having a time of it with all these changes," he wrote to Alfred Kazin just before Christmas ("house, child, book, money, relatives, trains and cars . . ."), but he was unaware of his wife's affair and still happy in his marriage. Sondra was "ravishing" in her impending motherhood, Pat Covici noted. "She looks ten years younger since you married her," he wrote his author, "all a-bubble with love and enthusiasm and praise of you." Bellow agreed: he



"Our best strategy may be to destigmatize embezzlement."

was *glücklich*, he told his friend and future biographer Ruth Miller—lucky.

THE central episode in "Herzog" is a messy triangle involving Herzog, a fusty academic bogged down in a stalled masterwork on Romanticism; his imperious wife, Madeleine; and her lover, Valentine Gersbach, a blustering, noisy charlatan with a wooden leg who masquerades as Herzog's best friend, his "special pal." Apart from a few shifts of geographical setting—Tivoli became the Berkshires, and Minneapolis, where Bellow and Ludwig both got teaching jobs in the fall of 1958, became Chicago—the book rendered a complete account of the Bellows' milieu. "When that book came out," said his friend Zita Cogan, "people ran to the bookstore to see who was in it." Gersbach, with his coarse good looks, his bad Yiddish, his posturing sentimentality ("Let's say you're a crumb," he lectures the hapless Herzog. "Let's say even you're a criminal. There's nothing—nothing!—you could do to shake my friendship"), was a satirical version of Bellow's own special pal, Jack Ludwig.

Bellow depended on Ludwig—there was even talk of Ludwig's becoming his literary executor—but he was conflicted about his friend, suggested Paul Meehl, a psychiatrist who saw Bellow during this period. Bellow's contempt for Ludwig's Yiddish was a theme in his sessions with Meehl. Bellow and Ludwig were both Canadians by birth, but Bellow was a city boy and Ludwig was provincial; his correspondence was thick with Yiddish phrases and malapropisms. His epistolary persona was indefatigably bluff: "What gives?" "Twang here and there a heartstring." "Joy find!"

Ludwig's prose bore the unmistakable imprint of Bellow's style. His work was full of picaresque urban characters with Bellovian names like Boyczuk and Mottyeh. He talked like Bellow, coining enigmatic aphorisms; one that stuck in Alfred Kazin's mind was "There are no concessions in God's circus." He may even have modelled a character on Bellow. And a story called "Confusions" that he wrote around this time featured a neurotic English instructor at a small, imitation-Ivy League college in California who was, like Bellow, a Canadian with an occasional taste for natty clothes. Bellow was apparently unoffended: "Confusions" appeared in the first number of *The Noble Savage*, a journal that Bellow co-edited with Ludwig and Keith Botsford in the early sixties. Bellow thought the story was funny, and tried to persuade his agent, Henry Volkening, to take on Ludwig as a client. (Volkening declined.)

Bellow's portrait of Ludwig evoked, in the person of Gersbach, the crude sensuality and ostentatious displays of learning for which he was known; but Sondra didn't get off lightly, either. Madeleine, Herzog's wife, was imperious, tantrum-prone, and demanding. The real-life model was more vulnerable. It's true that Sondra was spoiled. She filled the kitchen shelves with fancy goods from S. S. Pierce and put in all new appliances. She had little patience with Bellow's friends; when she was bored at a literary dinner party she amused herself by mentally writing obituaries of the guests. But Sondra also had a vulnerable side that was nowhere evident in Bellow's portrait of the cruel, majestic Madeleine. "I was just a nice Jewish girl who got in over my head," she told me. Unlike Herzog, a poor scholar with a modest academic reputation, Bellow was a figure of considerable stature by this time. The household revolved around *his* needs. As Sondra put it, "I was absolutely invisible."

Bellow was a distracted father to their infant son, Adam. Small children don't "need" a father, Bellow maintained. He was always going off to New York on the train and leaving Sondra alone in the big, empty house with the newborn. He taught at the New School on Thursdays, and did literary errands around town, but the general impression was that he had "girlfriends stashed everywhere," in the writer Herbert Gold's phrase.

The Bellows' marital discord was apparent to their friends. One particularly acrimonious scene ended with dinner strewn across the floor. Another time, Bellow claimed that Sondra had tried to run him over in the driveway. In the fall of 1957, the Bellows gave a party in Skokie, a suburb of Chicago, for friends and relatives; it was a crowded scene, one guest recalled, "with people from too many chapters in their lives." Sondra came up to Bellow "with fury in her eyes" and complained that he wasn't pulling his weight: "We were embarrassed."

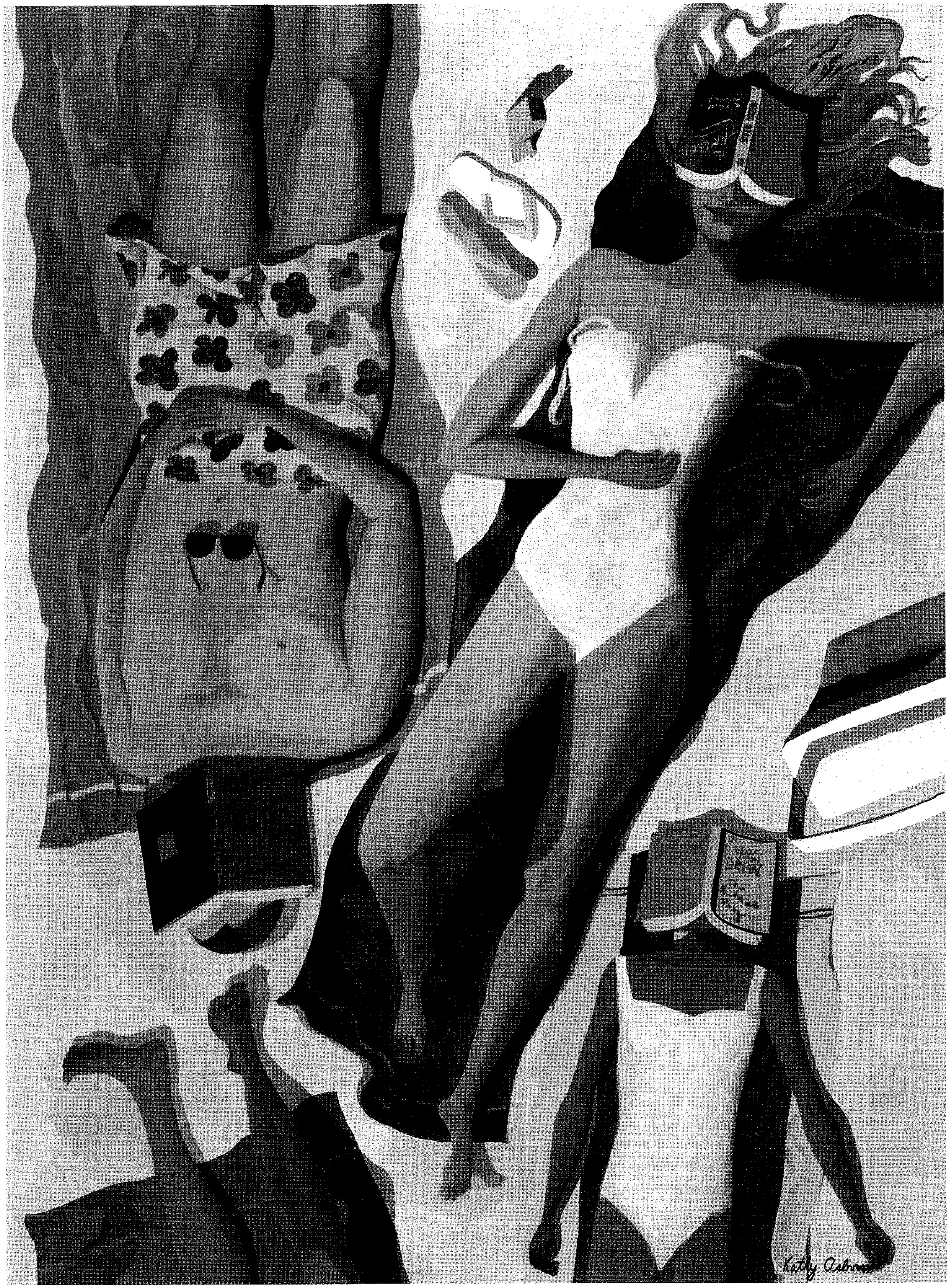
Bellow had taken a one-semester teaching job at Northwestern, and the family spent that winter in Evanston, staying in a small residential hotel a few blocks from Lake Michigan, where widows sat all day in the lobby; up the street, the El train rumbled by. Bellow and Sondra lived with Adam, now a year old, in a small suite. In the mornings, Sondra would drive around Evanston with the baby and visit relatives while Bellow wrote. By the summer, when they returned East, he had produced most of a manuscript, but Tivoli was a war zone. In June, after a "blowup," Sondra went off to New York with Adam, leaving Bellow to deal with his older son, Greg, who had just arrived for a visit. In August, she smashed up the car, precipitating a huge fight. "It has been tough," Bellow admitted to Keith Botsford. "Tough with Sondra, tough with myself, with Henderson, with my family." But domestic crises, far from slowing him down, had a stimulating effect on his imagination. "The worse my personal disasters became," he recalled of this period, "the funnier the book seemed to get."

There was no more money forthcoming, however, and his advance was long gone. By the fall of 1958, chronically short of funds, he was in Minneapolis, teaching at the University of Minnesota. He and Sondra, he felt, had patched things up. Ralph Ross, the head of the Humanities Program, had offered him a job, and had also arranged for Jack Ludwig to come to Minnesota. "I had to understand one very peculiar complication," Ross said, recounting his negotiation with Bellow. "Ludwig was so close a friend that they had made a pact: neither one of them could go anyplace unless both of them could go." While Bellow was still in Tivoli, revising "Henderson the Rain King," Sondra and Jack were together in Minneapolis, looking at apartments.

IN "Herzog," Madeleine makes therapy a condition of the couple's staying together—a stipulation that Sondra imposed on Bellow. "The book is a description of reality," attested Dr. Meehl, whom Bellow began consulting in Minnesota. Meehl was not an orthodox therapist. "Calm Protestant Nordic Anglo-Celtic" with a "grizzled little beard, clever, waving, mounting hair, and glasses, round, clean, and glittering," as Bellow

SKETCHBOOK BY KATHY OSBORN

PAGE TURNERS


DREW
Kathy Osborn

described him in the person of Dr. Edvig (a portrait the original admitted was "not bad"), he had a pronounced theoretical bent. Naturally, Meehl was impressed with Bellow. "He was what we call in the profession a YAVIS—young, attractive, verbal, intelligent, successful." Before long, Sondra, too, was consulting him.

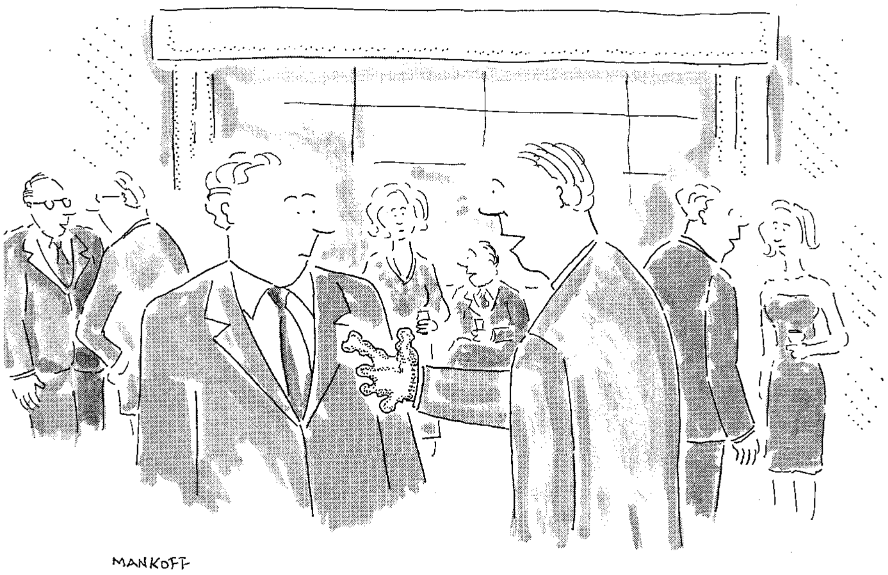
It wasn't an arrangement that made for effective therapy. "I found him a fascinating patient," said Meehl. "To put it quite frankly, I never quite figured this man out." Which was just as well, from Bellow's point of view. He made no secret of his contempt for therapists and therapy, even when he was in treatment. "What a man thinks he is doing counts for nothing," he wrote in a draft of "Herzog." "All his work in the world is done by impulses he will never understand." To lack self-knowledge was almost a point of honor. Like many artists, Bellow had a talismanic belief in his powers of creativity, and he was reluctant to tamper with the source of his inspiration, believing it to be, if not divine, then beyond the reach of prying analysts. As he liked to say, "I'll take the knocks."

Taking the knocks was more than a matter of pride; it was a condition. Bellow diagnosed himself as a "melancholic," "a depressive temperament"—which is different from being depressed. Even in the midst of domestic travails, Meehl noted, Bellow manifested a jaunty vigor: "I could never make up my mind how unhappy he was." Herzog, in a letter to a rival scholar named Mermelstein, offers the thesis that "people of powerful imagination, given to dreaming deeply and to raising up marvelous and self-sufficient fictions, turn to suffering sometimes to cut into their bliss, as people pinch themselves to feel awake." For Herzog, as for his creator, suffering is redemptive; it's "a more extended form of life, a striving for true wakefulness and an antidote to illusion"—and perhaps, less exaltedly, a form of masochism.

THERE was something comical about the whole Ludwig affair. Bellow, looking back, likened it to a "Goldoni comedy." During its Minneapolis run, he played his part beautifully. In his supporting role—according to one story that made the rounds—he'd gone off with another woman one night, leaving Sondra with Ludwig. ("And of course, from what you tell me," Dr. Edvig says to Herzog, "you haven't been guiltless.") The literary possibilities were endless. Herbert Gold half-facetiously suggested that Bellow "set it up so that he could write his book"—a theory corroborated by Dr. A. Boyd Thomes, the physician to the Minneapolis literary community. "Bellow has a tendency to set up situations and study them," Thomes said. "He sets them up and knocks them down again—like a pin-setter."

That Bellow, whether consciously or not, abetted Sondra's treachery is entirely plausible. How else could he explain his failure to grasp what everyone else already knew? Ralph Ross, for one, had begun to get "a funny feeling about Jack and Sondra" at a big party where Bellow was away lecturing; Ross greeted Sondra by kissing her shoulder, and saw Ludwig's face redden: "I thought, What's it to him?"

For all the sympathy he brought to bear on the human condition, for all the generalizing power of his insights into what human beings lived and felt, Bellow often missed out on their essence. He had a phenomenal gift for describing people's physical characteristics—their noses and eyes, the shape of their hair. It was their inner life that escaped him. His own marriage was a mystery to him. "Why would one marry a Fabergé?" Botsford once asked him about Sondra. "Because of the attraction of art," Bellow replied, invoking E. T. A. Hoffmann's story "The Sand Man," which features a mad Italian who constructs a woman out of "springs, cushions, and wires"; when a student falls in love with the inventor's contraption, she crumbles in his embrace. Bellow interpreted the story as a parable of Sondra's deficiencies, implying that she, too, was a " 'constructed' personality." But the story could be read another way: Bellow had no idea who Sondra really was, and never bothered to find out. "He met these women and he made them up," Ann Birstein said of Bellow's wives.



"Bob's the name. Toxic-waste handling's the game."

• •

"Sondra" was one of his inventions.

Of course, she was far from blameless in their troubles. On one occasion, Bellow claimed, she flew at him with her fists. "I'm having an ugly time," he confided to Richard Stern in November of 1959. "Sondra and I are both in despair over the course things have taken and I don't expect a happy ending." He was indefinite about the cause of their problems. "There are no frigidities, impotencies, adulteries, only miseries." The passive construction expressed his thinking on the matter—that it wasn't his fault: "Poor little Adam doesn't know he's about to be sentenced. I can't help him because it has nothing at all to do with me. I love Sash & respect her. But she has drawn the sword, and is just messhugah enough to swing it."

In fact, she already had. One day early in October, Sondra strode into the living room and declared "with icy control," as Bellow remembered it, that she wanted a divorce. "Sondra and I are finished," Bellow wrote dramatically to Covici:

> Sondra doesn't have enough feeling for me to continue. *I* have it, and I don't know what to do with it, either. I'm beginning to think of such things as antiques. They belong to older times or to childhood. It seems crazy for a man of 44 to have such *feeling* for his wife. Especially since she, being younger and more up-to-date, doesn't even know what it is.

The blame was all on Sondra's side: she had rejected him. Bellow's letters to Covici chronicling the breakup were oddly lighthearted, almost cheerful. He was keeping his head and "acting sensibly. When Covici compared him to Moses searching for the Promised Land, he answered wryly, "So far I've seen nothing but the desert. But perhaps God will choose me for His servant. I know he has nothing comfortable in mind for me."

Banished by Sondra, Bellow sought refuge at the home of a Minneapolis lawyer, Jonas Schwartz, a tiny man with "a deformed body and a huge head," as a fellow-lawyer described him, who appears as Sandor Himmelstein in "Herzog." Schwartz was a volatile character, given to hectoring his client about the treachery of women, judges, juries; he was what Herzog calls a "reality instructor." ("They'll put a meter on your nose, and charge you for breathing," the hunchback lawyer screams at Herzog, who is camped out on a cot beside the bar in Himmelstein's recreation room. "You'll be locked up back and front.") Like Dr. Meehl, Schwartz worked both sides of the street: he was Sondra's lawyer, too. It wasn't just greed that made Schwartz long for a piece of the action; it was vanity. In the fall of 1959, the Bellows' marital crisis was the best show in town. "Everyone wanted to get into the act," said the lawyer John Goetz, whom Bellow retained when it became clear that Schwartz couldn't represent both man and wife. Even Jack Ludwig, who was invited to preside over meetings between the two attorneys, played a supporting role.

Amazingly, Bellow still didn't know about Ludwig. When he did find out—"It had something to do with the kids," says one of the witnesses, remembering a mixup over social plans—he was livid. Richard Stern recalls a scene in the faculty club at the University of Chicago, with Bellow talking wildly of getting a gun. But in the end he wrote Ludwig a letter. After chronicling at great length Ludwig's deceptions and failures of literary judgment, he concluded with a masterly burst of invective directed as much at himself as at his correspondent:

> It wouldn't do much good to see matters clearly. With the sharpest eyes in the world I'd see nothing but the stinking fog of falsehood. And I haven't got the sharpest eyes in the world; I'm not a superman but superidiot. Only a giant among idiots would marry Sondra and offer you friendship. God knows I am not stainless faultless Bellow. I leave infinities on every side to be desired. But love her as my wife? Love you as my friend? I might as well have gone to work for Ringling Brothers and been shot out of the cannon twice a day. At least they would have let me wear a costume.

INSTALLED in Tivoli for a brief interlude between marriages in the summer of 1960, after a frantic lecture tour of Europe, Bellow got started on "Herzog." "It was like a Monet, the way he lived," recalled Rosette Lamont, a professor of comparative literature and one of his girlfriends during this period. Bellow wrote until noon, working at a long table on the second floor to the accompaniment of Bach cantatas on the record player, then came down and made a salad with fresh-picked vegetables from the garden; the tomatoes were "the size of dinosaurs' balls," he boasted.

Afternoons were reserved for household chores—climbing a ladder to wash the tall windows, taking down a hornets' nest, weeding the garden. One of Bellow's favorite outposts was the hammock, where he retired to read Blake or Donne. Then there was the mail—an increasingly heavy volume of letters from friends and fans, lawyers, and his colleagues on the masthead of *The Noble Savage*. "The most arduous task was that of dealing with the trail of women left throughout European capitals," according to Lamont. "'*Chere Amie*' would be amended to '*Amie*,' leaving some hope of future bliss." In the late afternoon, he strode his land: "the temporary gentleman-

LETTER • HENRY MILLER

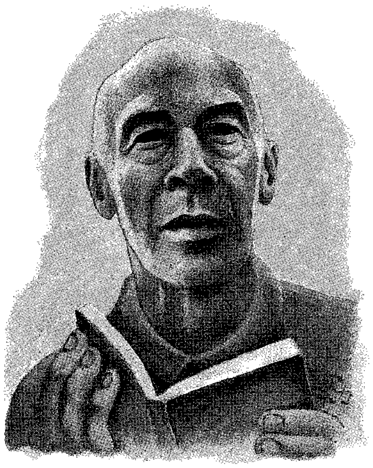
BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL

Henry Miller was living in Big Sur when he sent the following letter to Somerset Maugham concerning "The Razor's Edge." Maugham's novel follows a young American, Larry Darrell, from the trenches of the First World War to India, in search of enlightenment.

June 18th 1947

DEAR SOMERSET MAUGHAM—

Some weeks ago, while in Berkeley, I saw the movie based on your book—"The Razor's Edge." By a strange coincidence I walked in on the picture at the very point where I had left off discussing the problem you take up in the book.... There couldn't have been a more striking synchronization between this dinner table discussion—interrupted by someone's insistence on going to the cinema—and the opening sequences of the film. Then suddenly I caught the name "Lawrence Durrell" (as I thought) followed by talk of Greece. That was even more striking to me. For Larry Durrell, the British poet, was the friend who made it possible for me to go to Greece. Much of our talk concerned India and Tibet, the gurus, Ramakrishnan [*sic*] and so on. And when I went to Greece I met a painter named Glika on the island of Hydra with whom I had prolonged conversations, always on this theme. Just as I picked up your book to read—in a pocket edition—came a letter from him after a silence of seven years.



PAUL DAVIS

I felt I ought to impart these coincidences to you. You may not remember, but when I was in Paris, you were kind enough to have a countess and a princess, I believe, take me to lunch in order to see if I was in need of help. When you were in Chicago—sometime in 1941 or '42—Ben Abramson [a friend] started walking me to your hotel. Halfway there I got stage fright and bolted. This evening I finished your book, standing up near the window. That next to the last chapter—on India—impressed me. I don't know why, but somehow I would never have expected you to dwell on such a subject with such earnestness and tenacity. Forgive me for saying this! There was only one thing which baffled me—that your character, Larry, should have admitted finding no solution to the problem of evil. His behavior throughout the story seems to deny this, for as I read him he has no awareness of evil. And is not that what we are told the masters achieve—this ability to see beyond good and evil?

It is years since I read you. It was a joy to discover you again. Your book evoked so many wonderful memories. Even that Café Graf, Montmartre, had a special, intimate flavor for me. To be honest, I was amazed that you had been permitted to use such frank speech.

I almost forgot what I started out to write you about. I know I have no right to ask, but I risk it. Was there really such an American as you describe and did he have such experiences? Or was it all sheer invention?... A number of times, during my trips about the country—this country—I have met what are called "simple souls." They always impressed me as men of wisdom who had worked out the problems which plague us (most of us) in a previous existence. They are for me, these anonymous ones, the holy figures in America....

Well, enough! I really don't mean to tax you for a reply. You no longer need fame nor money. But I trust that a word of appreciation and a sign of remembrance, together with a long delayed word of gratitude, may not come amiss....

Wherever you are may fortune be kind to you! Before I had written a line I read "Of Human Bondage." It was one of the books which formed me. We owe so much to others and we acknowledge so little. God speed! ♦

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gardener," as Lamont described him, "digging his city heels into the ripe earth."

Sondra's dunning letters were the main intrusion on Bellow's rural ease. He was "broke," he complained to Jonas Schwartz: he owed ten thousand dollars to Viking, and he was paying alimony to two wives. On June 1st, the divorce was final. "Heigh-ho, the weather is beautiful anyway," he declared to his lawyer with characteristic good cheer, inveighing against the terms of the settlement but relieved that it was over. "The world *is* sound somewhere."

Bellow never ceased to think of himself as an innocent abroad, surrounded by conniving lawyers, wives, and publishers, like a country boy fallen among wily thieves. ("The Adventures of Augie March" was originally titled "Adventures Among the Machiavellians.") He was "a happier man" since the divorce, he maintained to Sondra's lawyer—an assessment his friends confirmed. The best times with Bellow were in the late fifties and early sixties, usually when he was between marriages, F. W. Dupee, a Tivoli neighbor, recalled. Those were "good, companionable times."

They didn't last. In the fall of 1959, Philip Roth had attended a lecture by Bellow at the University of Chicago, and had brought a date: a stunning, raven-haired young woman named Susan Glassman, who was working toward a Ph.D. in English at Chicago. After the lecture, she headed for the podium. She had met Bellow at Bard, she explained to her date; she would just go say hello. Four years later, she became his third wife.

"He always married the same woman," noted Gore Vidal, who observed the parade of wives and mistresses in and out of Tivoli from his neighboring manse. The resemblance between Susan Glassman and Sondra was hard to deny: they both had lush black hair, large blue or violet eyes, a Mediterranean "olive beauty." They were also alike in temperament. Like Sondra, Susan had little patience with Bellow's relatives; when they showed up for supper in Tivoli, she was offended to see the antique refectory table littered with bottles of Pepsi-Cola. (She would have preferred to serve wine.) Bellow was "like a little child," she confided to the Chicago writer and editor Herman Kogan and his wife when they came for dinner. She was just going to have to change him.

Bellow claimed to be ready for change. "Twelve years in one marriage, seven in another, two sons whose lives are withdrawn from me," he had summed up his situation in a 1959 letter to Keith Botsford. "I measure my complaints. I try to come to clarity with grief."

WHERE he found clarity—and humor—was in "Herzog," which, Susan reported to a friend on Christmas Day of 1963, was thirty pages from completion. "I can't imagine what life without Herzog will be like," she wrote. A heavy reviser, especially at the end, Bellow came up with an ingenious narrative strategy late in the novel's composition: Herzog, on the verge of a nervous breakdown, embarks on a program of writing polemical letters "to everyone under the sun." This epistolary breakthrough had great comic potential. Herzog, feeling a need "to explain, to have it out, to justify, to put in perspective, to clarify, to make amends," writes "endlessly, fantastically, to the newspapers, to people in public life, to friends and relatives, and at last to the dead, his own obscure dead and finally the famous dead," indulging in a mixture of "clairvoyance and spleen, *esprit de l'escalier*, noble inspirations, poetry and nonsense, ideas, hyperesthesia." Bellow always claimed to have been astonished that critics responded to the book with such solemnity: " 'Herzog' as I was writing it was really a big joke to me. It's what a professor does when his wife leaves him—he sees what Spinoza would say. I really meant the book as an attack on higher education in America."

In the beginning, Herzog wrote only aphorisms: "*On the knees of your soul? Might as well be useful. Scrub the floor.*" Once Bellow had stumbled on the epistolary conceit, letters spilled forth in profusion: to Nietzsche and Heidegger; to the credit department of Marshall Field; to various civic authorities ("Dear Sirs, The size and number of the rats in Panama City, when I passed through, truly astonished me. I saw one of them sunning himself beside a swimming pool"). At some point, as version after version piled up on lined paper with holes, typescripts, and the long yellow pads that Bellow had favored since his college days, he incorporated "Memoirs of a Bootlegger's Son," a manuscript about his Montreal childhood which he had abandoned in the fifties. The title also went through many drafts, from "Some Bones to Pick" to "Alas and Hurray." (He also thought, half facetiously, of calling it "The Fornicator.") One thing that never changed, however, was the opening sentence: "If I am out of my mind, it's all right with me, thought Moses Herzog."

BELLOW had no great expectations for the novel, predicting that it would sell eight thousand copies—like earlier books, a succès d'estime. He had been disappointed too many times. And how many people would want to read the story of an obscure academic who writes letters to the dead?

His publishers thought otherwise. In the corridors of Viking, the feeling was that Bellow had at last written his Big Book. It was the main selection of the Literary Guild, and Alfred Kazin offered a blurb, declaring that the book had left him "in a daze of newfound comprehension. It seems to me that Saul Bellow has written his best book, and incidentally the book of his generation and mine." On September 20, 1964, there was a front-page review in the *Times Book Review* by Julian Moynahan, who pronounced "Herzog" "a masterpiece." Validation by weighty critics soon followed. To V. S. Pritchett, writing in *The New York Review of Books,* Bellow was now "the most rewarding of living American novelists," a writer whose genius for the details of daily life far surpassed Hemingway's "stylized naturalism."

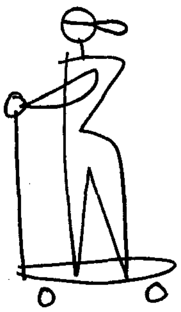
Bellow had been acclaimed as a major novelist before. But none of his previous books had captured the public imagination. Within a week of publication, "Herzog" had gone back for a second printing, then a third; by October, it was on the best-seller list. On October 19th, Bellow received a telegram signed by Catherine Carver and Aaron Asher, his editors at Viking: "HERZOG NUMBER ONE REPEAT ONE SUNDAY."

For once, literary success was accompanied by financial success. Bellow had never made much money from his books. Even "The Adventures of Augie March," which put in a brief appearance on the best-seller list, had sold just about twenty thousand copies. Others had done considerably worse. ("Seize the Day," for instance, sold seven thousand copies.) By the end of its forty-two weeks on the best-seller list, "Herzog" would sell a hundred and forty-two thousand copies. And its popularity increased the demand for Bellow's earlier works. In October, New American Library paid seventy-seven thousand dollars for the paperback rights to his first two books; two weeks later, Fawcett bought the paperback rights to "Herzog" and "The Adventures of Augie March" for the then stupefying sum of $371,350. At the age of forty-nine, Bellow was a wealthy man. "The kid finally did it," his brother Maurice commented.

The most startling thing about the success of "Herzog," Bellow marvelled to a reporter long afterward, was the response from readers—the intensely personal nature of the correspondence that his publisher forwarded to him in bundles day after day: "I received two or three thousand letters from people pouring out their souls to me, saying, 'This is my life, this is what it's been like for me.' And then I understood that for some reason these themes are visited upon me, that I didn't always pick them, they picked me." In Herzog's vulnerability and confusion, his anxious contemplation of the threat posed by a world that now possessed the means to destroy itself, and, above all, his lament for the erosion of individual identity, he was an ideal if idiosyncratic spokesman for the anxieties of his moment.

Herzog's high-flown discourses on the philosophy of history, mass man and totalitarianism, the bomb and the evils of modern industrial society are impressively erudite and intermittently profound. The novel "positively radiates intelligence," in the estimation of Philip Rahv; Herzog's mind (like his creator's) was "a real endowment, coherent, securely founded and of a genuine intellectual quality." At the same time, "Herzog" was Bellow's most realistic novel, the book most firmly grounded in the details of contemporary life. On Martha's Vineyard, Herzog observes a helicopter heading toward Hyannis Port, "where the Kennedys lived," and thinks, "Big doings there, once. The power of nations." He writes letters to Eisenhower and to Stevenson, engages in debate with scientists about the dangers of fallout and the threat of nuclear war, works in timely references to Khrushchev's shoe-banging performance at the United Nations and to Soviet cosmonauts lost in space.

But these allusions to current events are just background, like the blurred newspaper headlines that Herzog reads as "*MoonraceberlinKhrushchwarncommitteegalacticXrayPhouma.*" The real subject of "Herzog" is Herzog; Rahv called it "the most personal novel Bellow has written." Of course, the novel was also a brilliant rant against Sondra and Jack—a sustained exercise in self-vindication. Herzog is the sensitive one, the victim. Never questioning his own probity—philandering and breaking up his first marriage apparently don't count—he's a tireless moralist; his ambition, he tells his friend Luke Asphalter, is "to force Madeleine and Gersbach to have a *Conscience*." As Bellow's niece Lynn Rotblatt put it, offering a succinct critique of the book, "Enough already."



Bellow made no effort to disguise the identity of his characters—and they weren't pleased. "I'm not just a flower girl," complained Rosette Lamont, who may have been the model for Ramona; where Ramona was a florist working on an M.A. in art history, Rosette was a professor at Queens College. Jonas Schwartz was furious to find himself represented as the hectoring, dwarfish Sandor Himmelstein. "Have you read 'Herzog'?" he said excitedly to Bellow's lawyer, John Goetz, grabbing him by the lapels in an elevator. "He makes me into a son of a bitch; me, Jonas Schwartz." Ludwig, however, was reported to be happy with his likeness. He was Valentine Gersbach, he boasted to his students, predicting that someday he'd show up "in a lot of books."

Ludwig, his chutzpah undiminished, actually reviewed Bellow's book in *Holiday*, comparing it to "Ulysses" and Mann's "Doctor Faustus" in the scope of its achievement. As a review, it was a workmanlike performance, which made some interesting points about the tendency of Bellow's characters to see themselves as victims, but its most notable burden, announced at the beginning, was to rebut any suspicion that "Herzog" was autobiographical: "as if an artist of Bellow's enormous gifts were simply playing at second-guessing reality, settling scores and justifying the ways not only of Moses to Saul, but of Saul to Moses."

"It's a masterpiece in its own way," Bellow wrote Alfred Kazin of Ludwig's review:

> —a great virtuoso performance on the high-wire of self-justification, ingenious, shrewd, supersubtle, shamanistic, Rasputin-like. I'm really rather proud of the man. His cast-iron effrontery is admirable, somehow. If I ever commission a private Mt. Rushmore I'll stipulate that his head be given plenty of space.

Sondra and Adam ended up living in Great Neck—not far from Stony Brook, where Ludwig was teaching. Ruth Miller described a disastrous encounter that Sondra had with Bellow at Kennedy Airport a few years after "Herzog"'s publication: Bellow was on his way back from the Hamptons, and Sondra had arranged to meet him there with Adam, so that the boy could spend a couple of hours with his father. Afterward, she wrote him a letter containing a litany of grievances. She thanked him for having sent money to cover her moving expenses, but what about the money she'd need for a rug and new linoleum, for drapes and window shades? He lived well, bought clothes, flew off to Europe. Such small expenses shouldn't be a problem for him. At the very end, she introduced a conciliatory note: "I forgive you 'Herzog,' as I assumed you forgave me Jack."

It wasn't a propitious moment to mention Ludwig's name: he had just published a novel, which rehearsed the central episode of "Herzog" from the paramour's point of view. Entitled "Above Ground," it was the story—as the dust-jacket copy had it—of "a man devoted to love, sex, and life, a man who roars with lusty pleasure, defiant in the face of pain and death." Like "Herzog," the book had an epistolary motif, and the cast of characters would have been identifiable by any reader of Bellow's novel. There was the hearty, cuckolding Josh, the Madeleine-like Mavra, and, finally, the "small, bug-eyed" Louie, "a great guy for shooting letters out to his buddies and old girl friends all over the place."

Ludwig's novel reads like a gross caricature of Bellow's. During a violent fight with Madeleine, Herzog notices "an odd white grime in the corners of her mouth." In "Above Ground," when Josh interrupts an argument between Louie and Mavra, Louie says, "Look at the froth on her mouth and tell me who is sane?" And Bellow wasn't the only writer whom Ludwig clumsily emulated. The novel also included a stream-of-consciousness meditation right out of Molly Bloom's soliloquy in "Ulysses": "loingyre lovefunnel whirlwind headballsthroattongue whirled turning breastcunttongue spaceflapping darkswirl lightswath love a love this way found."

Bellow's reply to Sondra's letter was restrained, considering the circumstances. "I shrink from letter-tournaments," he began, calling for a "permanent hatchet-burial." But he made it clear that he didn't want to hear any more about money. His trips were no business of hers; her window shades meant nothing to him. "I will do everything I can for Adam, whom I love. There will be certain fringe benefits for you. But don't push things." As for Ludwig's novel:

> I've put that behind me, but I haven't forgotten the smallest detail. Nothing, I assure you. I made something of the abuses I suffered at your hands. As for the "humiliations" you speak of, I can match you easily. There is another book, isn't there. It is the product of two minds and two spirits, not one. Kind acquaintances and friends have made sure that I would read it. The letters of the heroine are conspicuously superior in style, but the book is garbage. It is monstrous to be touched by anything so horribly written. The worst thing about it, to a man who has been faithful to his art for thirty years, is the criminal vulgarity of the thing. I don't worry too much about my reputation, the "image" (I don't think you pay much attention to that, either) but I loathe being involved even peripherally with such shit. Now I've gotten a foot in the cesspool. Enough of that. But suppose the book had been good, successful. Can you see me demanding damages? I don't think you can. So now, let the thing stop there.

It was an aesthetic credo of Bellow's—even a point of honor—not to know what his own books were about. When Josephine Herbst praised "Seize the Day," he was grateful: "It's hard for me to know, because so much of the time I'm deaf, dumb and blind, the slave of unknown masters." Concerning "Henderson," he wrote to Richard Stern, "I can tell you what I wished it to be, but I can't say what it *is*. Every ability was brought to bear except one—the talent for self-candor which so far I have been able to invest only in the *language* of what I've written. I should be able to do better than that. People are waiting. My own soul is waiting." With "Herzog," in a sense, he had arrived. The novel was unquestionably autobiographical; the scenes in which Herzog recalls his adored mother's death in freezing Chicago when he was sixteen ("She had begun to change into earth!") and his bitter quarrels with his bullying father were faithful transcripts of reality. But even more than biographical truth "Herzog" enacts, on the deepest level, the emotional truth of Bellow's life: the discovery that, like Herzog, he was "aging, vain, terribly narcissistic, suffering without proper dignity"—a man both "mother-bound" and "his father's son," condemned to live out the pattern of betrayal and rejection passed on from one generation to the next. The power of "Herzog," its purity of style, derives in large measure from its self-knowledge, its awareness of the man its author had become. The critic Stanley Edgar Hyman saw this clearly: "Bellow has developed one aspect of himself—his guilt and desperation—into a character and a story."

And yet Bellow remained, at least to some degree, in a state of incomprehension about his own psyche. He was a great repeater of his mistakes, despite his friends' attempts to counsel him. When he was first involved with Susan, Richard Stern wrote to him, sounding a Gallic note of caution: "SAUL: ATTENDS. Nice as she is, fuckable as she is, let this friend say quickly ATTENDS. You know the epigraph for 'Europe' [Stern's novel]: Every man of character has a typical experience which recurs over and over again."

Bellow's typical experience was marriage. One of the mysteries of his life was his attraction to an institution for which he was somewhat ill-suited and which he held in low regard. "What did I know?" he once told a friend, airily explaining away his marriage to Susan, which lasted six years. "I was in the middle of a book." He was so unsure of his judgment in conjugal matters that he would canvass his friends before committing himself. What did they think of this or that prospective bride? Was she lively? Beautiful? A potential wife, or only appropriate for a fling? Women for Bellow were "*un rêve, pas un unrealité, un phantasme*," Nadine Raoul-Duval, his Paris mistress in the late forties, testified. They nourished his œuvre but never achieved real intimacy with him. The only time Bellow wanted to be married, he quipped, was at dinnertime.

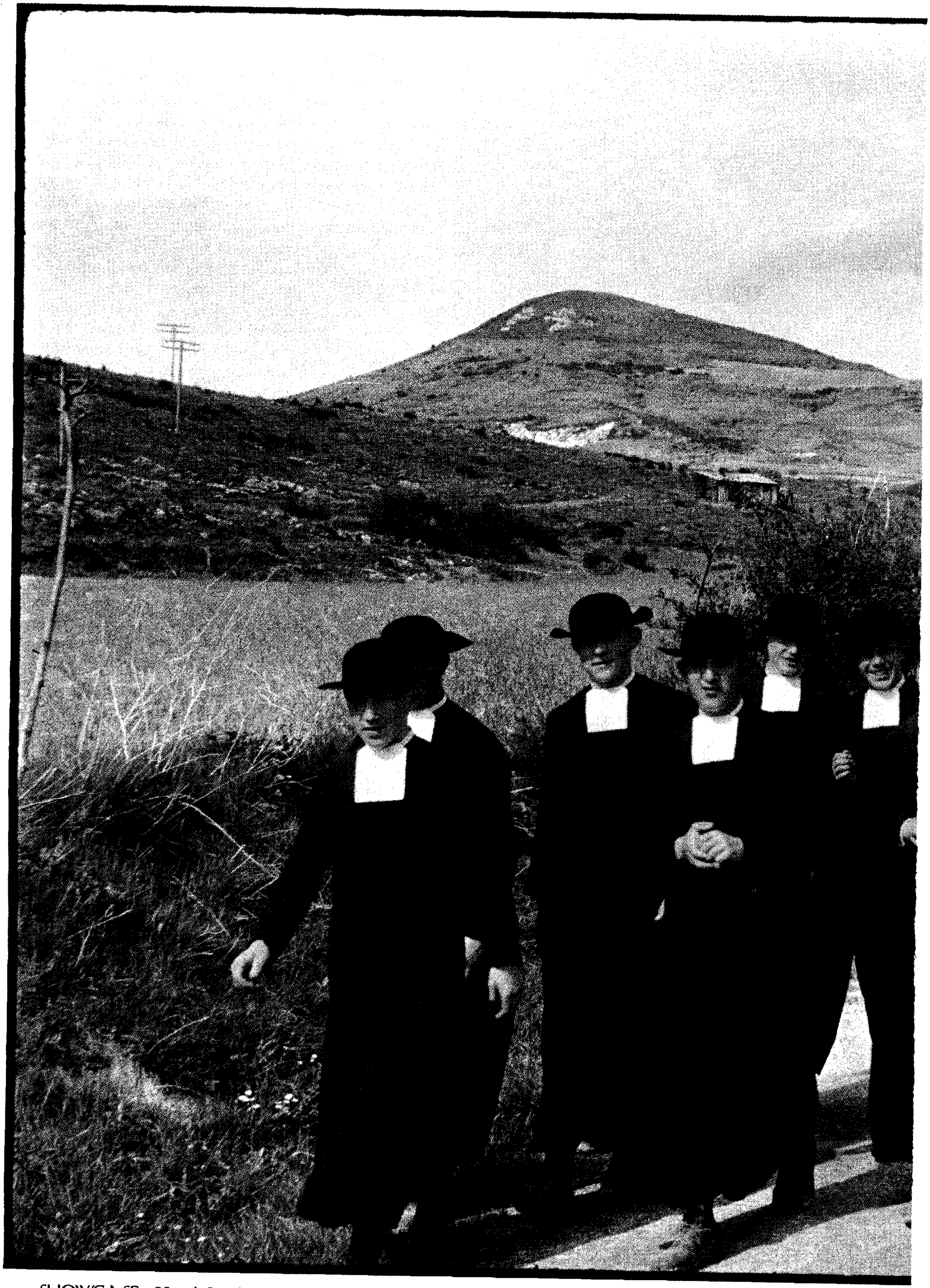
Given his problematic marital history, his friends wondered why he would even bother to marry again. Bellow offered an ironic explanation: "I'm a slow learner." An early version of "Herzog" provides deeper insight:

> The reason for the marriage to Juliana was to arrange for the continuation of his blindness and cowardice. Because he knew she did not love him and he took no chance of fulfillment by being married to her. Thus he could continue to be a slave of the world, and within its system of necessity.

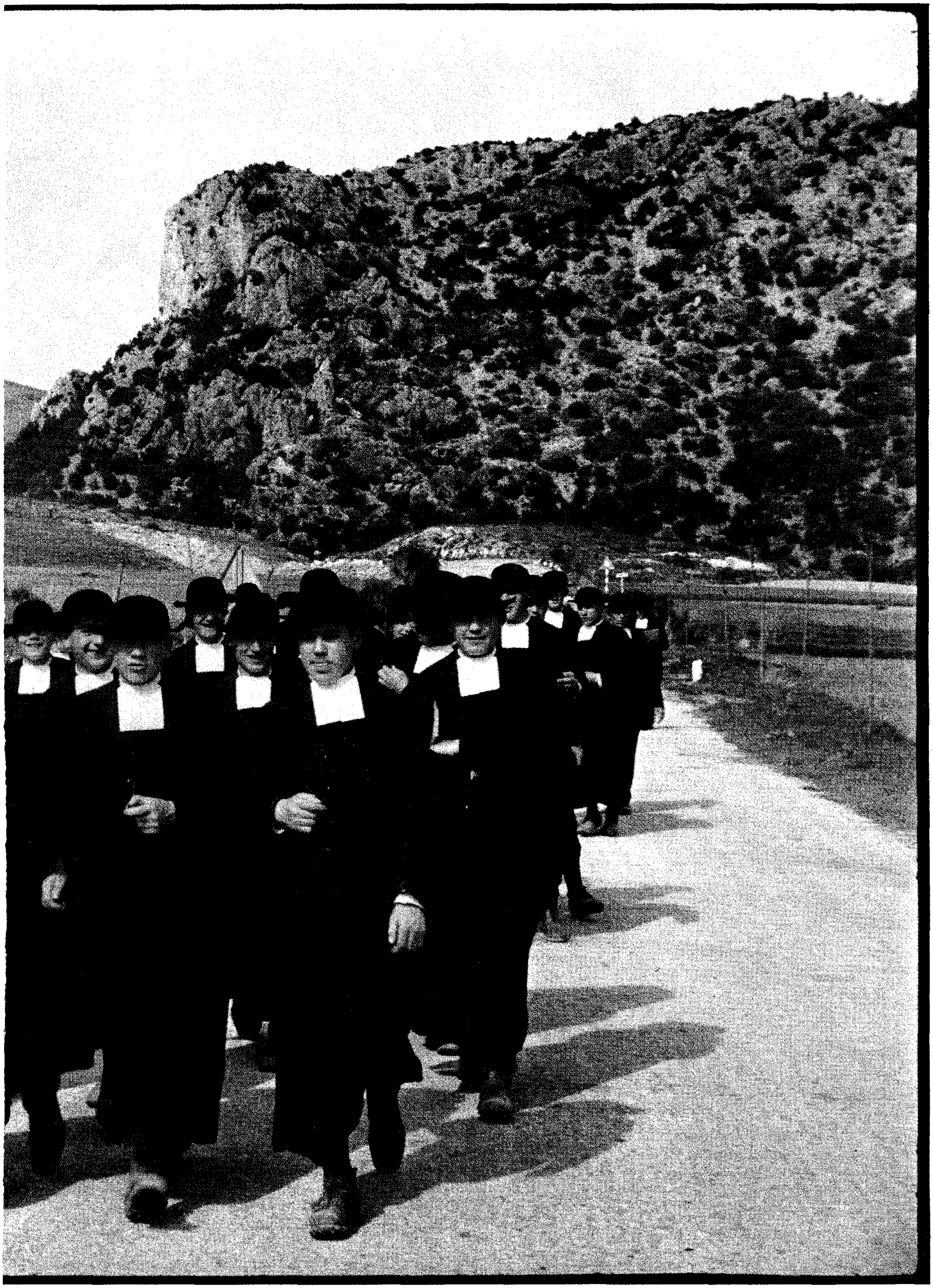
Bellow's propensity to marry was clearly born of deep conflict. His offhand joke about dinner concealed a longing for peaceful domesticity, and that was something he continued to search for, with various women, in his exuberant Bellovian way. (He eventually found it, after a fourth failed marriage, with his fifth wife, Janis Freedman, whom he married in 1989, at the age of seventy-four.) "He had had two wives; there were two children; he had once been a scholar, and in the closet his old valise was swelled like a scaly crocodile with his uncompleted manuscript": thus Herzog at forty-seven, in Bellow's notes for the book, "his problems as unsolved as ever." One solution that Herzog contemplated—and rejected—was to marry his voluptuous girlfriend Ramona, whom he imagined exhorting, "Marry me! Be my wife! End my troubles!" In the end, though, fact diverged from fiction. Herzog remained alone. ♦

Handelsman

"You serve an inferior wine, Ted, but you have a nice view of Peconic Bay."



SHOWCASE *Henri Cartier-Bresson, legendary stalker of the "decisive moment" and master of the Leica, turns ninety tl*



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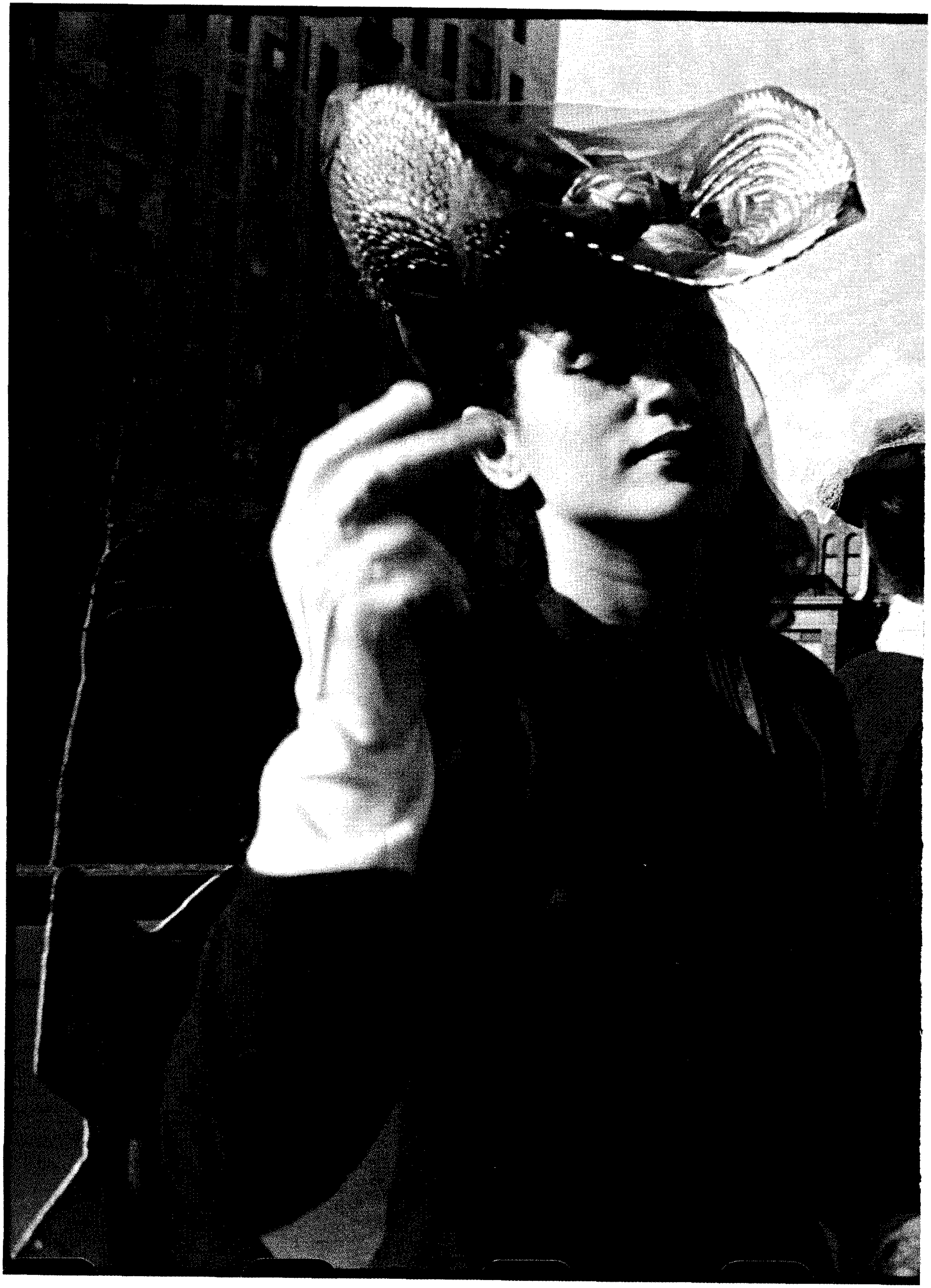
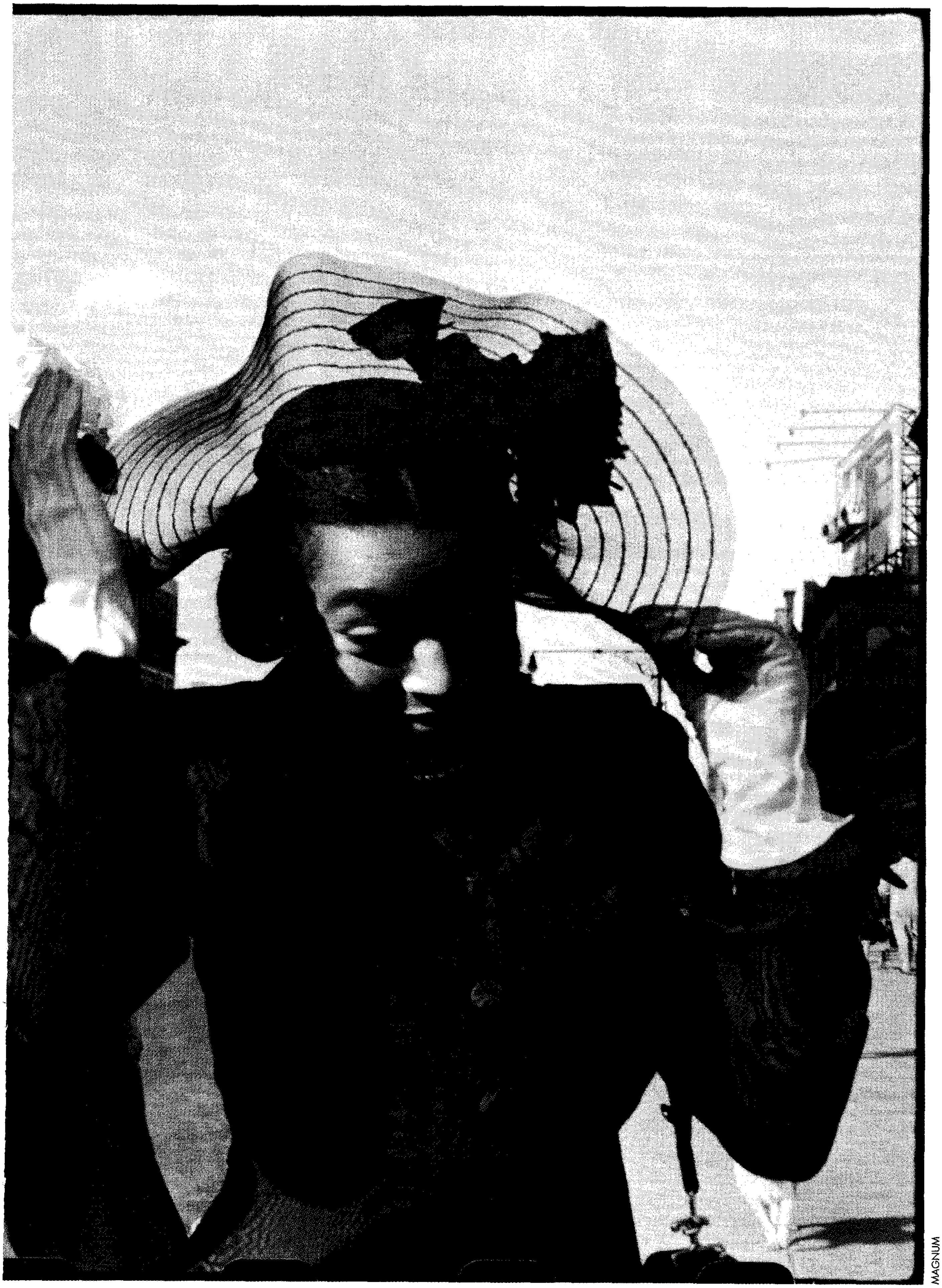
eek. "Tête à Tête," a collection of his portraits of both the celebrated and the unknown, will be published in September.



For more than sixty years, Cartier-Bresson has been capturing life as it happens, as in these images of women in Harlem (1947) an



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ı the previous page, seminarians in Burgos, Spain (1953). His work blurs the boundaries between photojournalism and fine art.

ANNALS OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

MAN GOES TO SEE A DOCTOR

You spend six years in analysis with New York's last Freudian: random associations, uncomfortable confessions, unleashed reminiscences—and that's just the shrink.

BY ADAM GOPNIK

LATELY, a lot of people in New York—why, I'm not entirely sure—have been sending me clippings about the decline and fall of psychoanalysis. Most of the reasons given for its disappearance make sense: people are happier, busier; the work done by the anti-Freudian skeptics has finally taken hold of the popular imagination, so that people have no time for analytic longueurs and no patience with its mystifications. Along with those decline-and-fall pieces, though, I've also been sent—and in this case I don't entirely want to know why—a lot of hair-raising pieces about mental illness and its new therapies: about depressions, disasters, hidden urges suddenly (or brazenly) confessed and how you can cure them all with medicine. Talking is out, taking is in. When I go back to New York, some of my friends seem to be layered with drugs, from the top down, like a pousse-café: Rogaine on top, then Prozac, then Xanax, then Viagra.... In this context, my own experience in being doctored for mental illness seems paltry and vaguely absurd, and yet, in its way, memorable.

I was on the receiving end of what must have been one of the last, and easily one of the most unsuccessful, psychoanalyses that have ever been attempted—one of the last times a German-born analyst, with a direct laying on of hands from Freud, spent forty-five minutes twice a week for six years discussing, in a small room on Park Avenue decorated with Motherwell posters, the problems of a "creative" New York neurotic. It may therefore be worth recalling, if only in the way that it would be interesting to hear the experiences of the last man mesmerized or the last man to be bled with leeches. Or the last man—and there must have been such a man as the sixteenth century drew to a close and the modern age began—to bring an alchemist a lump of lead in the sincere belief that he would take it home as gold.

So it happened that on a night in October, 1990, I found myself sitting in a chair and looking at the couch in the office of one of the oldest, most patriarchal, most impressive-looking psychoanalysts in New York. He had been recommended to me by another patient, a twenty-year veteran of his couch. The choice now presents itself of whether to introduce him by name or by pseudonym, a choice that is more one of decorum than of legal necessity (he's dead). To introduce him by name is, in a sense, to invade his privacy. On the other hand, not to introduce him by name is to allow him to disappear into the braid of literature in which he was caught—his patients liked to write about him, in masks, theirs and his—and from which, at the end, he was struggling to break free. He had, for instance, written a professional article about a well-known patient, in which the (let's say) playwright who had inspired the article was turned into a painter. He had then seen this article, and the disputes it engendered, transformed into an episode in one of the playwright's plays, with the playwright-painter now turned into a novelist, and then the entire pas de deux had been turned by a colleague into a further psychoanalytic study of the exchange, with the occupations altered yet again—the playwright-painter-novelist now becoming a poet—so that four layers of disguise (five, as I write this) gathered around one episode in his office. "Yes, but I received only one check" was his bland response when I pointed this out to him.

His name, I'll say, was Max Grosskurth, and he had been practicing psychoanalysis for almost fifty years. He was a German Jew of a now vanishing type—not at all like the small, wisecracking, scared Mitteleuropean Jews that I had grown up among. He was tall, commanding, humorless. He liked large, blooming shirts, dark suits, heavy handmade shoes, club ties. He had a limp, which, in the years when I knew him, became a two-legged stutter and then left him immobile, so that our last year of analysis took place in his apartment, around the corner from the office. His roster of patients was drawn almost exclusively from among what he liked to call creative people, chiefly writers and painters and composers, and he talked about them so freely that I sometimes half expected him to put up autographed glossies around the office, like the ones on the wall at the Stage Deli. ("Max—Thanks for the most terrific transference in Gotham! Lenny") When we began, he was eighty, and I had crossed thirty.

I've read that you're not supposed to notice anything in the analyst's office, but that first evening I noticed it all. There was the couch, a nice Charles Eames job. On one wall there was a Motherwell print—a quick ink jet—and, opposite, a framed poster of one of the Masaccio frescoes in Santa Maria del Carmine in Florence. I was instantly impressed. The two images seemed to position him (and me) between Italian humanism, in its first, rocky, realistic form, at one end, and postwar New York humanism, in its jumpy, anxiety-purging form, at the other. On a bookshelf beside him were nothing but bound volumes of a psychoanalytic journal, rising to the ceiling. (He had edited that journal for a time. "Let me give you some counsel," he said to me much later. "Editing never means anything.")

He was lit by a single shaded bulb, just to his left, in that kind of standing brass lamp with a long arcing neck. This put his face in a vaguely sinister half light, but, with his strong accent and the sounds of traffic out on Park Avenue and a headlight occasionally sweeping across the room, the scene had a comforting European melancholia, as though directed by Pabst.

Why was I there? Nothing interesting: the usual mixture of hurt feelings, confusion, and incomprehension that comes to early-arriving writers when the thirties hit. John Updike once wrote that, though the newcomer imagines that literary New York will be like a choir of angels, in fact it is like the Raft of the Medusa—and he was wrong about this only in that the people on the Raft of the Medusa still have hope. In New York, the raft has been adrift now for years, centuries, and there's still no rescue boat in sight. The only thing left is to size up the others and wait for someone to become weak enough to eat.

I spilled out my troubles; told him of my sense of panic, anxiety; perhaps wept. He was silent for a minute—not a writer's minute, a real one, a long time.

"Franz Marc was a draftsman of remarkable power," he said at last: the first words of my analysis. His voice was deep and powerful, uncannily like Henry Kissinger's: not quacky, pleading Viennese but booming, arrogant German.

The remark about Franz Marc was not *quite* apropos of nothing—he knew me to be an art critic—but very near. (Franz Marc was the less famous founder of the German Expressionist movement called Der Blaue Reiter; Kandinsky was the other.) He must have caught the alarmed look in my eyes, for he added, more softly, "There are many worthwhile unexplored subjects in modern art." Then he sat up in his chair—swallowed hard and pulled himself up—and for a moment I had a sense of just how aged he was.

"You put me in mind," he said—and suddenly there was nothing the least old in the snap and expansive authority of his voice—"you put me in mind of Norman Mailer at a similar age." (This was a reach, or raw flattery; there is nothing about me that would put anyone in mind of Norman Mailer.) " 'Barbary Shore,' he thought, would be the end of him. What a terrible, terrible, terrible book it is. It was a great blow to his narcissism. I recall clearly attending dinner parties in this period with my wife, an extremely witty woman, where everyone was mocking poor Norman. My wife, an extremely witty woman . . ." He looked at me as though, despite the repetition, I had denied it; I tried to look immensely amused, as though reports of Mrs. Grosskurth's wit had reached me in my crib. "Even my wife engaged in this banter. In the midst of it, however, I held my peace." He rustled in his chair, and now I saw why he had sat up: he suddenly became a stiff, living pillar, his hands held before him, palms up—a man holding his peace in the middle of banter flying around the dinner table. A rock of imperturbable serenity! He cautiously settled back in his chair. "Now, of course, Norman has shown great resourcefulness and is receiving extremely large advances for his genre studies of various American criminals."

He talked about his patients so freely that I half expected him to put up autographed glossies around the office, like the ones at the Stage Deli.

FILIP PAGOWSKI

From the six years of my analysis, or therapy, or whatever the hell it was, there are words that are as permanently etched in my brain as the words "E pluribus unum" are on the nickel. "Banter" and "genre studies" were the first two. I have never been so grateful for a *mot juste* as I was for the news that Mrs. Grosskurth had engaged in banter, and that Norman Mailer had made a resourceful turn toward genre studies. Banter, that was all it was: criticism, the essential competitive relations of writers in New York—all of it was *banter*, engaged in by extremely witty wives of analysts at dinner parties. And all you had to do was . . . refuse to engage in it! Hold your peace. Take no part! Like him—sit there like a rock and let it wash over you.

And then there was the wacky perfection of his description of the later Mailer, with its implications of knowing (not firsthand certainly; Mailer, as far as I know, had never been his patient) the inside story: he had, under stress, found appropriate genre subjects. American criminals. The whole speech, I thought, was so profound that it could be parsed and highlighted like one of those dog-eared assigned texts you find on the reserve shelf in undergraduate libraries: Artists suffered from *narcissism*, which made them susceptible to *banter*, which they could overcome by *resourcefulness*, which might lead them to—well, to take up *genre studies*. ("Genre studies," I was to discover, was Grosskurthese for "journalism." He often indulged in strangely Johnsonian periphrases: once, talking about Woody Allen, he remarked, "My wife, who was an extremely witty woman, was naturally curious to see such a celebrated wit. We saw him in a cabaret setting. I recall that he was reciting samples of his writings in a state of high anxiety." It took me days of figuring—what kind of reading had it been? a kind of Weimar tribute evening?—to realize that Dr. and Mrs. Grosskurth had gone to a night club and heard the comedian's monologue.)

I came away from that first session in a state of blissful suspended confusion. Surely this wasn't the way psychoanalysis was supposed to proceed. On the other hand, it was much more useful—and interesting, too—to hear that Norman Mailer had rebounded by writing genre studies than it was to hear that my family was weird, for that I knew already. I felt a giddy sense of relief, especially when he added, sardonically, "Your problems remind me of"—and here he named one of the heroes of the New York School. "Fortunately, you suffer neither from impotence nor alcoholism. That is in your favor." And that set the pattern of our twice- and sometimes thrice-weekly encounters for the next five years. He was touchy, prejudiced, opinionated, impatient, often bored, usually high-handed, brutally bigoted. I could never decide whether to sue for malpractice or fall to my knees in gratitude for such an original healer.

Our exchanges hardened into a routine. I would take the subway uptown at six-thirty; I would get out at Seventy-seventh Street, walk a couple of blocks uptown, and enter his little office, at the corner of Park Avenue, where I would join three or four people sitting on a bench. Then the door opened, another neurotic—sometimes a well-known neurotic, who looked as though he wanted to hide his face with his coat, like an indicted stockbroker—came out, and I went in. There was the smell of the air-conditioner.

"So," he would say. "How are you?"

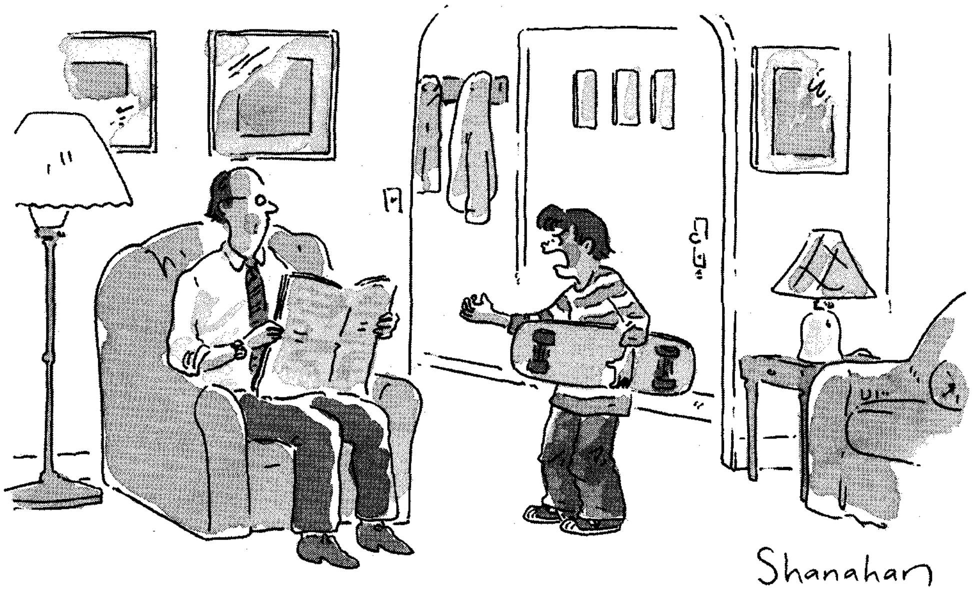
"Terrible," I would say, sometimes sincerely, sometimes to play along.

"I expected no less," he would say, and then I would begin to stumble out the previous three or four days' problems, worries, gossip. He would clear his throat and begin a monologue, a kind of roundabout discussion of major twentieth-century figures (Freud, Einstein, and, above all, Thomas Mann were his touchstones), broken confidences of the confessional, episodes from his own life, finally snaking around to an abrupt "So you see . . . " and some thunderously obvious maxim, which he would apply to my problems—or, rather, to the nonexistence of my problems, compared with real problems, of which he'd heard a few, you should have been here then.

For instance: I raised, as a problem, my difficulty in finishing my book, in writing without a deadline. I raised it at length, circuitously, with emotion. He cleared his throat. "It is commonplace among writers to need extreme arousal. For instance, Martin Buber." I riffled through my card catalogue: wasn't he the theologian? "He kept pornography on the lecture stand with him, in order to excite him to a greater performance as a lecturer. He would be talking about 'I and thou,' and there he would be, shuffling through his papers, looking at explicit photographs of naked women." He shook his head. "This was really going very far. And yet Buber was a very great scholar. It was appropriate for his approach. It would not be appropriate for you, for it would increase your extreme overestimation of your own role."

Mostly, he talked about what he thought it took to survive in the warfare of New York. He talked about the major figures of New York literary life—not necessarily his own patients but writers and artists whose careers he followed admiringly—as though they were that chain of forts upstate, around Lake George, left over from the French and Indian War: the ones you visited as a kid, where they gave you bumper stickers. There was Fort Sontag, Fort Frankenthaler, Fort Mailer. "She is very well defended." "Yes, I admire her defenses." "Admirably well defended." Once, I mentioned a famous woman intellectual who had recently got into legal trouble: hadn't she been well defended? "Yes, but the trouble is that the guns were pointing the wrong way, like the British at Singapore." You were wrung out with gratitude for a remark like that. I was, anyway.

It was his theory, in essence, that "creative" people were inherently in a rage, and that this rage came from their disappointed narcissism. The narcissism could take a negative, paranoid form or a pos-



"You left your goddam car in the driveway again!"

"O.K., I'm sitting. What is it?"

• •

itive, defiant, arrogant form. His job was not to cure the narcissism (which was inseparable from the creativity) but, instead, to fortify it—to get the drawbridge up and the gate down and leave the Indians circling outside, with nothing to do but shoot flaming arrows harmlessly over the stockade.

He had come of age as a professional in the forties and fifties, treating the great battlers of the golden age of New York intellectuals, an age that, seen on the couch—a seething mass of resentments, jealousies, and needs—appeared somewhat less golden than it did otherwise. "How well I recall," he would begin, "when I was treating"—and here he named two famous art critics of the period. "They went to war with each other. One came in at ten o'clock. 'I must reply,' he said. Then at four-thirty the other one would come in. 'I must reply,' he would say. 'No,' I told them both. 'Wait six months and see if anyone recalls the source of this argument.' They agreed to wait. Six months later, my wife, that witty, witty woman, held a dinner party and offered some pleasantry about their quarrel. No one understood; no one even remembered it. And this was in the days when *ARTnews* was something. I recall what Thomas Mann said. . . . " Eventually, abruptly, as the clock on the wall turned toward seven-thirty, he would say, "So you see . . . this demonstrates again what I always try to tell you about debates among intellectuals."

I leaned forward, really wanting to know. "What is that, Doctor?" I said.

"*No one cares*. People have troubles of their own. We have to stop now." And that would be it.

I would leave the room in a state of vague, disconcerted disappointment. *No one cares*? No one cares about the hard-fought and brutally damaging fight for the right sentence, the irrefutable argument? And: *People have troubles of their own*? My great-aunt Hannah could have told me that. *That* was the result of half a century of presiding over the psyches of a major moment in cultural history? And then, fifteen minutes later, as I rode in a cab downtown my heart would lift—would fly. That's right: *No one cares! People have troubles of their own!* It's O.K. That doesn't mean you shouldn't do it; it means you should do it, somehow, for its own sake, without illusions. Just write, just live, and don't care too much yourself. No one cares. It's just *banter*.

SOMETIMES his method of bringing me to awareness—if that was what he was doing—could be oblique, not to say bizarre. There was, for instance, the Volestein Digression. This involved a writer whose name was, shall we say, Moses Volestein. Dr. G. had once read something by him and been fascinated by his name. "What a terrible name," he said. "*Vole*. Why would a man keep such a terrible name?" His name didn't strike me as a burden, and I said so.

"You are underestimating the damage that this man's name does to his psychic welfare," he replied gravely. "It is intolerable."

"I don't think he finds it intolerable."

"You are wrong."

Then, at our next meeting: "Your resistance to my discussion of Volestein's name at our last session is typical of your extreme narcissistic overestimation. You continue to underestimate the damage a name like that does to the human psyche."

"Doctor, surely you overestimate the damage such a name does to the human psyche."

"You are wrong. His family's failure to change this name suggests a deep denial of reality." He pursued Volestein's name through that session and into the next, and finally I exploded.

"I can't believe we're spending another hour discussing Moses Volestein's funny name!" I said. "I mean, for that matter, some people might think my own name is funny."

He considered. "Yes. But your name is merely very ugly and unusual. It does not include a word meaning a shrewlike animal with unpleasant associations for so many people. It is merely very ugly."

And then I wondered. My name—as natural to me as the sound of my own breathing? I had volunteered that it might be peculiar, out of some mixture of gallantry and point-scoring. But my hurt was enormous. My wife, who had kept her own name when we married—out of feminist principle, I had thought—said, "Yes, when we met I couldn't believe it. I wouldn't go out with you for a week because of it." It was a shock as great as any I had received, and as salutary. Had he obsessed on Volestein with the intention of making me face Gopnik, in all its oddity, and then, having faced it, grasp some ironic wisdom? *I had a funny name.* And then the corollary: people could have funny names and go right on working. They might never even notice it. Years later, online, I found myself on a list of writers with extremely funny names—I suppose this is what people do with their time now that they are no longer in psychoanalysis—and I was, amazingly, happy to be there. So that was one score. Even your name could be absurd and you wouldn't know it. And the crucial addition: it didn't matter. Indifference and armor could get you through anything.

SOMETIMES Dr. Grosskurth would talk about his own history. He was born in Berlin before the First World War, at a time when German Jews were German above all. His mother had hoped that he would become a diplomat. But he had decided to study medicine instead, and particularly psychiatry; he was of that generation of German Jews who found in Freud's doctrines what their physicist contemporaries found in Einstein's. He had spoken out against the Nazis in 1933 and had been forced to flee the country at a moment's notice. One of his professors had helped him get out. (He was notably unheroic in his description of this episode. "It was a lesson to me to keep my big mouth shut" was the way he put it.) He fled to Italy, where he completed medical school at the University of Padua.

He still loved Italy: he ate almost every night at Parma, a restaurant nearby, on Third Avenue, and spent every August in Venice, at the Cipriani. One spring, I recall, I announced that my wife and I had decided to go to Venice.

He looked at me tetchily. "And where will you stay?" he asked.

"At this *pensione*, the Accademia," I said.

"No," he said. "You wish to stay at the Monaco, it is a very pleasant hotel, and you will have breakfast on the terrace. That is the correct hostel for you."

I reached into my pockets, where I usually had a stubby pencil, and searched them for a stray bit of paper—an American Express receipt, the back of a bit of manuscript paper—to write on.

"No, no!" he said, with disgust. My disorderliness was anathema to his Teutonic soul. "Here, I will write it down. Oh, you are so chaotic. Hand me the telephone." I offered him the phone, which was on a small table near his chair, and he consulted a little black book that he took from his inside right jacket pocket. He dialled some long number. Then, in a voice even deeper and more booming than usual—he was raised in a time when long-distance meant long-distance—he began to speak in Italian.

"*Sì, sono Dottore Grosskurth.*" He waited for a moment—genuinely apprehensive, I thought, for the first time in my acquaintance with him—and then a huge smile, almost a big-lug smile, broke across his face. They knew him.

"*Sì, sì,*" he said, and then, his voice lowering, said, "No," and something I didn't understand; obviously, he was explaining that Mrs. Grosskurth had died. "*Pronto!*" he began, and then came a long sentence beginning with my name and various dates in *giugno*. "*Sì, sì.*" He put his hand over the receiver. "You wish for a bath or a shower?" he demanded.

"Bath," I said.

"Good choice," he said. It was the nearest thing to praise he had ever given me. Finally, he hung up the phone. He looked at the paper in his hand and gave it to me.

"There," he said. "You are reserved for five nights, the room has no view of the canal, but, actually, this is better, since the gondola station can be extremely disturbing. You will eat breakfast on the terrace, and there you will enjoy the view of the Salute. Do not eat dinner there, however. I will give you a list of places." And, on an "Ask Your Doctor About Prozac" pad, he wrote out a list of restaurants in Venice for me. (They were mostly, I realized later, after I got to know Venice a bit, the big old, fifties-ish places that a New York analyst would love: Harry's Bar, Da Fiore, the Madonna.)

"You will go to these places, order the spaghetti *vongole*, and then . . ."

"And then?"

"And then at last you will be happy," he said flatly.

HE was so far from being an orthodox Freudian, or an orthodox anything, that I was startled when I discovered how deep and passionate his attachment to psychoanalytic dogma was. One day, about three years in, I came into his office and saw that he had a copy of *The New York Review of Books* open. "It is very sad," he began. "It is very sad indeed, to see a journal which was once respected by many people descend into a condition where it has lost the good opinion of all reasonable people." After a few moments, I figured out that he was referring to one of several much discussed pieces that the literary critic Frederick Crews had written attacking Freud and Freudianism.

I read the pieces later myself and thought them incontrovertible. Then I sat down to read Freud, for the first time—"Civilization and Its Discontents," "Totem and Taboo," "The Interpretation of Dreams"—and was struck at once by the absurdity of the arguments as arguments and the impressive weight of humane culture marshalled in their support. One sensed that one was in the presence of a kind of showman, a brilliant essayist, leaping from fragmentary evidence to unsupported conclusion, and summoning up a whole body of psychological myth—the Id, the Libido, the Ego—with the confidence of a Disney cartoonist drawing bunnies and squirrels. I found myself, therefore, in the unusual position of being increasingly skeptical of the therapeutic approach to which I fled twice a week for comfort. I finally got up the courage to tell Grosskurth this.

"You therefore find a conflict between your strongest intellectual convictions and your deepest emotional gratification needs?" he asked.

"Yes."

He shrugged. "Apparently you are a Freudian."

This seemed to me a first-rate exchange, honors to him, but I couldn't let it go. My older sister, a professor of psychology at Berkeley, regarded Freud as a comic relic (I had told her about my adventures in psychoanalysis), and in the midst of the *New York Review* debate she wrote one of the most devastating of the anti-Freud letters to the editor. She even made a passing, dismissive reference to the appeal of "figures of great personal charisma"—I knew what *that* was about—and then stated, conclusively, that there was nothing to be said in defense of psychoanalysis that couldn't also be said in defense of magic or astrology. ("She is very well defended, your sister," Grosskurth said.)

On behalf of his belief, Grosskurth would have said—did say, though over time, if not in these precise words—that while Freud may have been wrong in all the details, his central insight was right. His insight was that human life is shaped by a series of selfish, ineradicable urges, particularly sexual ones, and that all the other things that happen in life are ways of toning down these urges and giving them an "acceptable" outlet. An actual, undramatic but perilous world of real things existed, whose essential character was its indifference to human feelings: this world of real things included pain, death, and disease, but also many things unthreatening to our welfare. His project—the Freudian project, properly understood—was not to tell the story of our psyche, the curious drawing-room comedy of Id and Ego and Libido, but just the opposite: to drain the drama from all our stories. He believed that the only thing to do with the knowledge of the murderous rage within your breast was not to mythologize it but to put a necktie on it and heavy shoes and a dark-blue woollen suit. Only a man who knew that, given the choice, he would rape his mother and kill his father could order his spaghetti *vongole* in anything like peace.

There was, however, a catch in this argument, or so I insisted in the third year of my analysis, over several sessions and at great length. Weren't the well-defended people he admired really the ones at the furthest imaginable remove from the real things, the reality, whose worth he praised so highly? Did Susan Sontag actually have a better grasp of things-as-they-are than anyone else? Would anybody point to Harold Brodkey as a model of calm appraisal of the scale of the world and the appropriate place of his ego in it? Wasn't the "enormous narcissistic overestimation" of which he accused me inseparable from the "well-defended, internalized self-esteem" he wanted me to cultivate? The people who seemed best defended—well, the single most striking thing about them was how breathtakingly out of touch they were with the world, with other people's feelings, with the general opinion of their work. You didn't just have to be armored by your narcissism; you could be practically entombed in it, so that people came knocking, like Carter at King Tut's tomb, and you'd still get by. Wasn't that a problem for his system, or, anyway, for his therapy?

"Yes," he said coldly.

"Oh," I said, and we changed the subject.

My friends were all in therapy, too, of course—this was New York—and late at night, over a bottle of red wine, they would offer one "insight" or another that struck me as revelatory: "My analyst helped me face the recurring pattern in my life of an overprotectiveness that derives from my mother's hidden alcoholism," or "Mine helped me see more clearly how early my father's depression shaped my fears," or "Mine helped me see that my reluctance to publish my personal work is part of my reluctance to have a child." What could I say? "Mine keeps falling asleep, except when we discuss Hannah Arendt's sex life, about which he knows quite a lot."

His falling asleep was a problem. The first few years I saw him, he still had a reasonably full schedule and our sessions were usually late in the day; the strain told on him. As I settled insistently (I had decided that if I was going to be analyzed I was going to be analyzed) into yet one more tiresome recital of grievances, injustices, anxieties, childhood memories, I could see his long, big, partly bald head nodding down toward the knot of his tie. His eyes would flutter shut, and he would begin to breathe deeply. I would drone on—"And so I think that it was my mother, really, who first gave me a sense of the grandiose. There was this birthday, I think my sixth, when I first sensed . . ."—and his chin would nestle closer and closer to his chest, his head would drop farther, so that I was looking right at his bald spot. There was only one way, I learned, after a couple of disconcerting weeks of telling my troubles to a sleeping therapist, to revive him, and that was to gossip. "And so my mother's relationship with my father reminds me—well, in certain ways it reminds me of what people have been saying about Philip Roth's divorce from Claire Bloom," I would say abruptly, raising my volume on the non sequitur.

Instantly, his head would jerk straight up, his eyes open, and he would shake himself all over like a Lab coming out of the water. "Yes, what are they saying about this divorce?" he would demand.

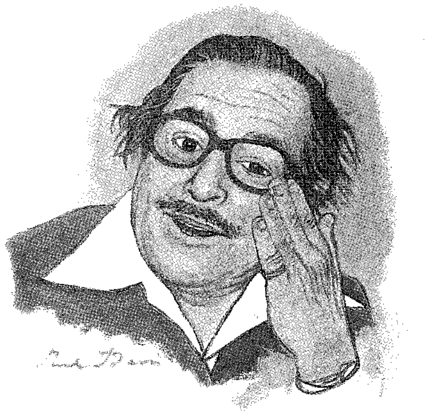
"Oh, nothing, really," I would say, and then I would wing it for a minute, glad to have caught his attention.

Unfortunately, my supply of hot literary gossip was very small. So there were times (and I hope that this is the worst confession I will ever have to make) when I would invent literary gossip on the way uptown, just to have something in reserve if he fell asleep, like a Victorian doctor going off to a picnic with a bottle of smelling salts, just in case. ("Let's see: what if I said that Kathy Acker had begun an affair with, oh, V. S. Pritchett—

LETTER • TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

LAST STAGE

Tennessee Williams and Truman Capote were competitive friends until 1976, when Capote published "Unspoiled Monsters," a story that portrayed Williams in an extremely unflattering light. The following year, Capote, speaking at Towson State University, in Maryland, made headlines: just released from a substance-abuse clinic, he was pulled off the stage in a drunken stupor. Williams, who was also fighting to stay on the wagon, used the occasion to patch up the friendship.



July 21, 1978

Dear Truman:

Knowing my history, I feel sure that you will receive this letter as sincerely well intended in every way. I am truly aghast by the media's exploitation of your period of disequilibrium. I have been through it all myself.

Even when I was temporarily outraged by that "monster" piece in *Esquire*, I admired, as I have always, your brilliance and artistry. In circumstances of this sort, I know from experience that it is not pity we want nor expressions of it. It occurred to me, though, that this might be an appropriate time to say to you something that you said to me once. I care about you more than you know. I am deeply concerned that you give to your being the care that your talent deserves of you. It was not so long ago that I read "Mojave" with a deeper appreciation of that talent than I had ever felt for it before. Perhaps the thing most to help you right now is your incomparable sense of humor. It's hard for me to write in this vein. Rest a bit. And never, never stop laughing!

With new understanding, your old friend,

Tennessee

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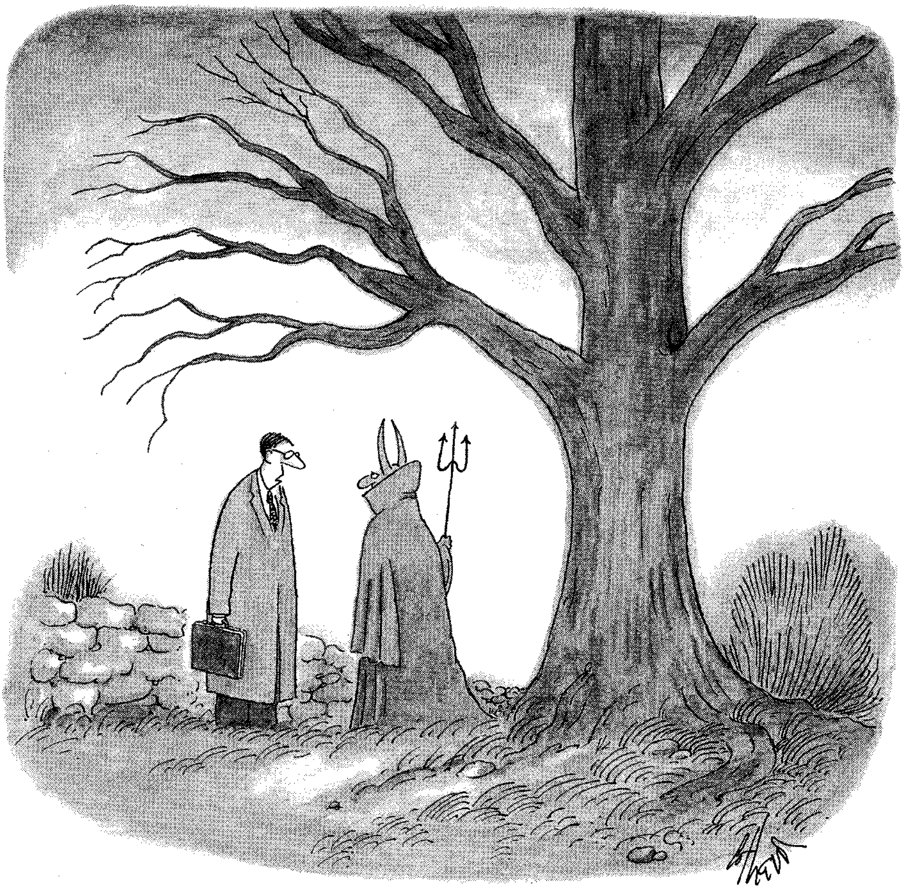


"It's important that no one see us talking together."

• •

that would hold *anybody's* interest.") I felt at once upset and protective about his sleeping. Upset because it was, after all, my nickel, and protective because I did think that he was a great man, in his way, and I hated to see him dwindling: I wondered how long he would go on if he sensed that he was dwindling.

Not long ago, I read, in a book about therapy, a reference to a distinguished older analyst who made a point of going to sleep in front of his patients. Apparently, Grosskurth—for who else could it have been?—was famous for his therapeutic skill in falling asleep as you talked. It was tactical, even strategic.

Or was he just an old man trying to keep a practice going for lack of anything better to do, and doing anything—sleeping, booking hotel rooms, gossiping, as old men do—so that he would not have to be alone? Either limitlessly shrewd or deeply pathetic: which was it? Trying to answer that question was one of the things that kept me going uptown.

As we went on into our fourth and fifth years, all the other problems that I had brought to him became one problem, *the* New York problem. Should my wife—should we—have a baby? We agonized over it, in the modern manner. Grosskurth listened, silently, for months, and finally pronounced.

"Yes, you must go ahead and have a child. You will enjoy it. The child will try your patience repeatedly, yet you will find that there are many pleasures in child-rearing." He cleared his throat. "You will find, for instance, that the child will make many amusing mistakes in language."

I looked at him, a little dumbfounded—that was the best of it?

"You see," he went on, "at about the age of three, children begin to talk, and naturally their inexperience leads them to use language in surprising ways. These mistakes can really be *extremely* amusing. The child's errors in language also provide the kinds of anecdotes that can be of value to the parents in a social setting." It seemed an odd confidence on which to build a family—that the child would be your own, live-in Gracie Allen, and you could dine out on his errors—but I thought that perhaps he was only defining, so to speak, the minimal case.

So we did have the child. Overwhelmed with excitement, I brought him pictures of the baby at a week old. ("Yes," he said dryly, peering at my Polaroids, "this strongly resembles a child.") And, as my life was changing, I began to think that it was time to end, or anyway wind down, our relationship. It had been six years, and, for all that I had gained—and I thought that I had gained a lot: if not a cure, then at least enough material to go into business as a blackmailer—I knew that if I was to be "fully adult" I should break my dependence. And he was growing old. Already aged when we began, he was now, at eighty-five or six, becoming frail. Old age seems to be a series of lurches, rather than a gradual decline. One week he was his usual booming self, the next week there was a slow deliberateness in his gait as he came to the office door. Six months later, he could no longer get up reliably from his chair, and once fell down outside the office in my presence. His face, as I helped him up, was neither angry nor amused, just doughy and preoccupied, the face of a man getting ready for something. That was when we switched our sessions to his apartment, around the corner, on Seventy-ninth Street, where I would ring the bell and wait for him to call me in—he left the door open, or had it left open by his nurse, whom I never saw. Then I would go inside and find him—having been helped into a gray suit, blue shirt, dark tie—on his own sofa, surrounded by Hofmann and Miró engravings and two or three precious Kandinsky prints.

About a month into the new arrangement, I decided to move to Europe to write, and I told him this, in high spirits and with an almost breathless sense of advancement: I was going away, breaking free of New York, starting over. I thought he would be pleased.

To my shock, he was furious—his old self and then some. "Who would have thought of this idea? What a self-destructive regression." Then I realized why he was so angry: despite all his efforts at fortification, I had decided to run away. Fort Gopnik was dropping its flag, dispersing its troops, surrendering its territory—all his work for nothing. Like General Gordon come to reinforce Khartoum, he had arrived too late, and failed through the unforgivable, disorganized passivity of the natives.

In our final sessions, we settled into a non-aggression pact. ("Have we stopped too soon, Doctor?" I asked. "Yes," he said dully.) We talked neutrally, about art and family. Then, the day before I was to leave, I went uptown for our last session.

It was a five-thirty appointment, in the second week of October. We began to talk, amiably, like old friends, about the bits and pieces of going abroad, visas and vaccinations. Then, abruptly, he began to tell a long, meandering story about his wife's illness and death, which we had never talked about before. He kept returning to a memory he had of her swimming back and forth in the hotel pool in Venice the last summer before her death.

"She had been ill, and the Cipriani, as you are not aware, has an excellent pool. She swam back and forth in this pool, back and forth, for hours. I was well aware that her illness was very likely to be terminal." He shook his head, held his hands out, dealing with reality. "As soon as she had episodes of dizziness and poor balance, I made a very quick diagnosis. Still, back and forth she swam."

He stopped; the room by now had become dark. The traffic on Seventy-ninth Street had thickened into a querulous, honking rush-hour crowd. He was, I knew, too shaky on his feet to get up and turn on the lights, and I thought that it would be indelicate for me to do it—they were his lights. So we sat there in the dark.

"Naturally, this was to be the last summer that we spent in Venice. However, she had insisted that we make this trip. And she continued to swim." He looked around the room, in the dark—the pictures, the drawings, the bound volumes, all that was left of two lives joined together, one closed, the other closing.

"She continued to swim. She had been an exceptional athlete, in addition to being, as you know, an extremely witty woman." He seemed lost in memory for a moment, but then, regaining himself, he cleared his throat in the dark, professionally, as he had done so many times before.

"So you see," he said, again trying to make the familiar turn toward home. And then he did something that I don't think he had ever done before: he called me by my name. "So you see, Adam, in life, in life . . . " And I rose, thinking, Here at our final session—no hope of ever returning, my bag packed and my ticket bought to another country, far away—at last, the truth, the point, the thing to take away that we have been building toward all these years.

"So you see, Adam, in retrospect . . . " he went on, and stirred, rose, on the sofa, trying to force his full authority on his disobedient frame. "In retrospect, life has many worthwhile aspects," he concluded quietly, and then we had to stop. He sat looking ahead, and a few minutes later, with a goodbye and a handshake, I left.

Now I was furious. I was trying to be moved, but I would have liked to be moved by something easier to be moved by. That was all he had to say to me, *Life has many worthwhile aspects*? For once, that first reaction of disappointment stuck with me for a long time, on the plane all the way to Paris. All these evenings, all that investment, all that humanism, all those Motherwell prints—yes, all that money, my money—for that? *Life has many worthwhile aspects*? Could there have been a more fatuous and arrhythmic and unmemorable conclusion to what had been, after all, *my* analysis, my only analysis?

Now, of course, it is more deeply engraved than any other of his words. In retrospect, life has many worthwhile aspects. Not all or even most aspects. And not beautiful or meaningful or even tolerable. Just *worthwhile*, with its double burden of labor and reward. Life has *worth*—value, importance—and it takes a while to get there.

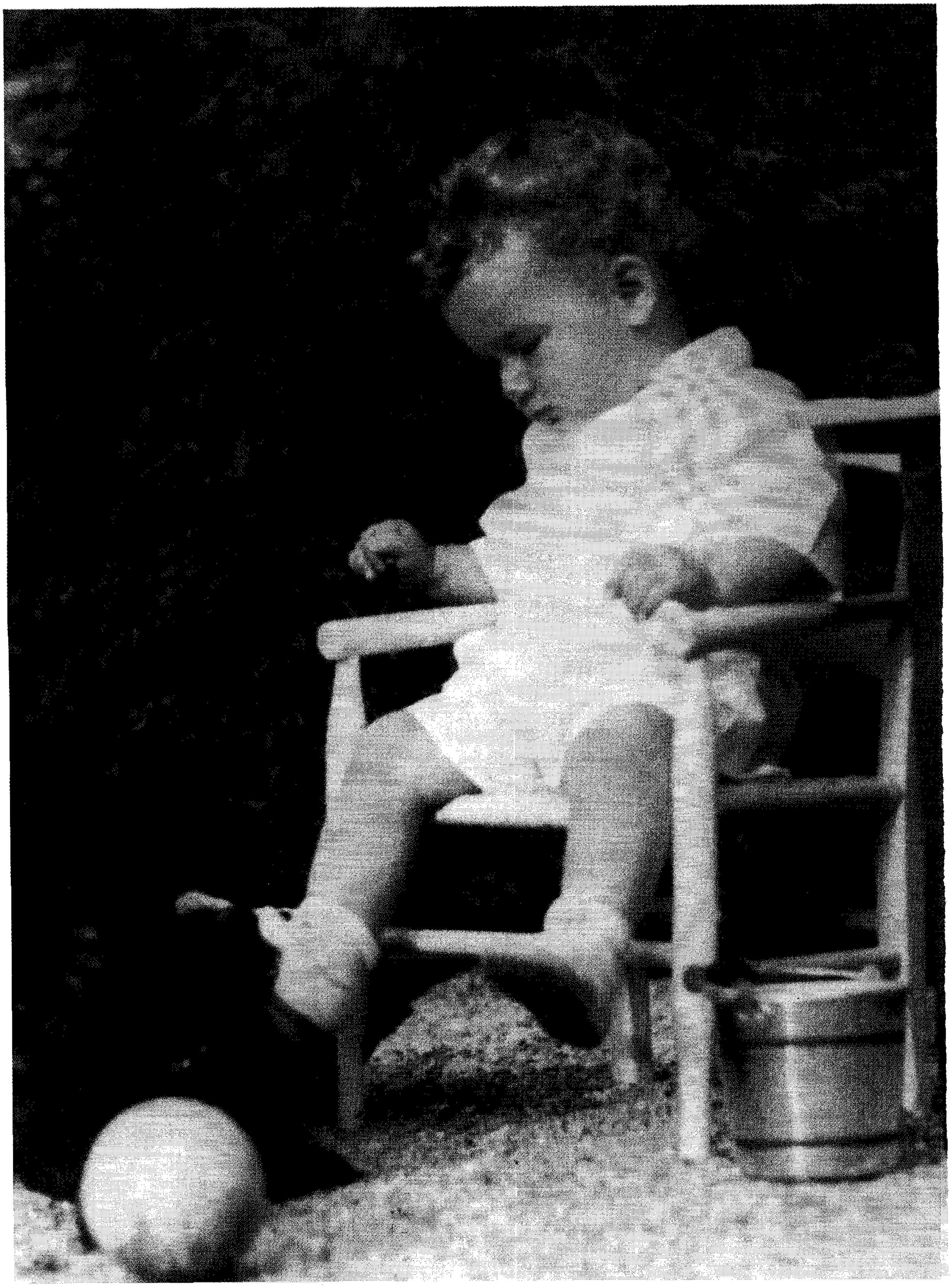
I came back to New York about a year later and went to see him. A woman with a West Indian accent had answered when I called his number. I knew that I would find him declining, but still, I thought, I would find him himself. We expect our fathers to take as long a time dying as we take growing up. But he was falling away. He was lying on a hospital bed, propped up, his skin as gray as pavement, his body as thin and wasted as a tree on a New York street in winter. The television was on, low, tuned to a game show. He struggled for breath as he spoke.

He told me, very precisely, about the disease that he had. "The prognosis is most uncertain," he said. "I could linger indefinitely." He mentioned something controversial that I had written. "You showed independence of mind." He turned away, in pain. "And, as always, very poor judgment."

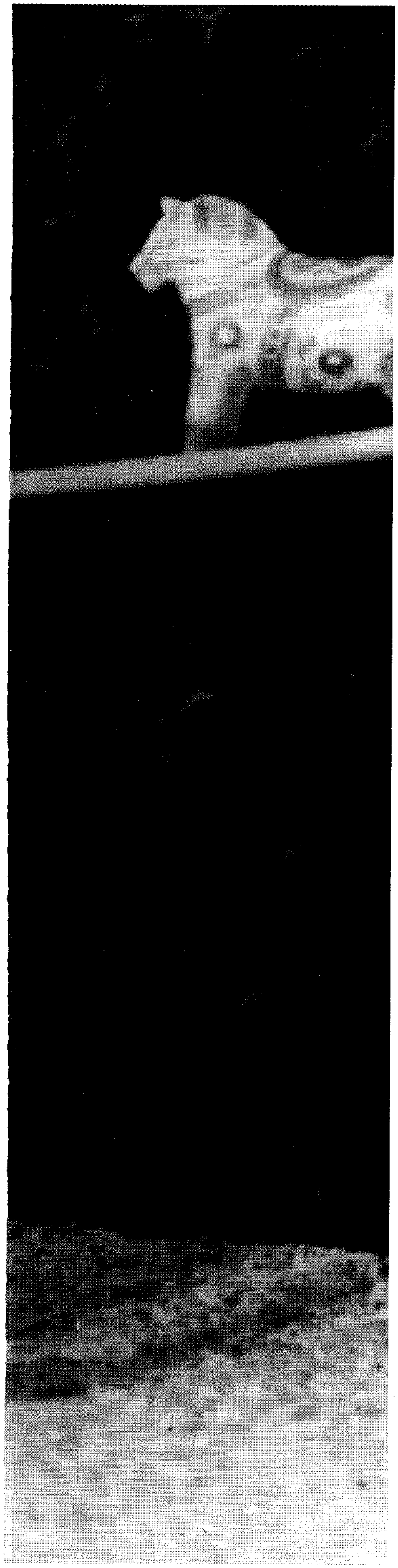
In New York again, five months later, I thought, I'll just surprise him, squeeze his hand. I walked by his building, and asked the doorman if Dr. Grosskurth was in. He said that Dr. Grosskurth had died three months before. For a moment I thought, Someone should have called me, one of his children. Yet they could hardly have called all his patients. ("But I was special!" the child screams.) Then I stumbled over to Third Avenue and almost automatically into Parma, the restaurant that he had loved. I asked the owner if he knew that Dr. Grosskurth had died, and he said yes, of course: they had had a dinner, with his family and some of his friends, to remember him, and he invited me to have dinner, too, and drink to his memory.

I sat down and began an excellent, solitary dinner in honor of my dead psychoanalyst—seafood pasta, a Venetian dish, naturally—and, in his memory, chewed at the squid. (He liked squid.) The waiter brought me my bill, and I paid it. I still think that the owner should at least have bought the wine. Which shows, I suppose, that the treatment was incomplete. ("They should have paid for your wine?" "It would have been a nice gesture, yes. It would have happened in Paris." "You are hopeless. I died too soon, and you left too early. The analysis was left unfinished.")

The transference wasn't completed, I suppose, but something—a sort of implantation—did take place. He is inside me. In moments of crisis or panic, I sometimes think that I have his woollen suit draped around my shoulders, even in August. Sometimes in ordinary moments I almost think that I have become him. Though my patience is repeatedly tried by my child, I laugh at his many amusing mistakes in language—I have even been known to repeat these mistakes in social settings. I refer often to the sayings of my wife, that witty, witty woman. On the whole, I would say that my years in analysis had many worthwhile aspects. ♦



The Lindbergh baby, Charles, Jr., at the family house in Hopewell, New Jersey, in 1932. His kidnapping was an immeasurat



ss that the family never discussed.

PERSONAL HISTORY

FORTRESS LINDBERGH

Growing up in flight from celebrity and the crime of the century.

BY REEVE LINDBERGH

IN kindergarten, one of my brothers told a friend on the playground that our father had discovered America. At about the same age, I dreamed that our father was God. If he was God, that explained everything: why we called him Father, when all our friends called their fathers Daddy; why he had so little contact with the families in our neighborhood, and yet so many people spoke about him with a kind of reverence; why we had to eat Pepperidge Farm bread rather than Wonder bread; why the house shook when he was in a bad mood; and why I could find him in the Encyclopædia Britannica.

I am the second daughter and youngest child of Charles Augustus and Anne Morrow Lindbergh. My father became internationally famous in May, 1927, for making the first non-stop solo flight from New York to Paris, in a single-engine Ryan monoplane called the Spirit of St. Louis. He was twenty-five years old. My mother met him in December of that year, when he made a good-will trip to Mexico, where her father was serving as the American Ambassador. She was twenty-one. They were married in 1929, and they lived together for more than forty-five years—until his death, in 1974.

As fliers, my mother and father explored the world as a team, mapping air routes for the aviation industry in its infancy. As writers, they published many accounts of their adventures and thoughts. His best-known work was "The Spirit of St. Louis," which describes the 1927 flight; hers was "Gift from the Sea," a philosophical meditation on women's lives in this century.

To many people, my parents seemed unlikely partners from the very beginning. At the time they met, my mother was a shy, fragile-looking ambassador's daughter, sensitive and introspective—a New England intellectual brought up in a family that was considered to be both unusually well bred and well read. The Morrows were students, teachers, lawyers, bankers, and diplomats. The Morrows had strong family ties, attended the Presbyterian church regularly, and voted according to the traditional Republican guidelines of their day. The Morrows were physically small, but they were sturdy in constitution and in character.

My father, on the other hand, was a tall, deeply reserved, independent outdoorsman from the Midwest. All his life, he displayed a courteous indifference to convention, whether it was intellectual, religious, or political. He rarely attended church, and he hated school. His grandparents were Swedish immigrants on the American frontier, and he found his first love on a Minnesota farm, where he spent his boyhood, and in the natural world extending far beyond it—a child's infinity of river and field and forest. Above my father's head in those early days, and ever afterward, there stretched the even more compelling infinity of the sky.

In 1932, my father and mother suffered the death of their first child, Charles: he died in a highly publicized kidnapping. My mother was pregnant at the time with her second son, my brother Jon. After he was born, my parents retreated from public life in order to raise him, and the children who followed, in protective privacy. Before I was born, in 1945, they had moved many times, seeking a quiet life away from the press. Just after the Second World War, they bought a house in Darien, Connecticut, on the shore of Long Island Sound, where I grew up. Over the years, they became so successful at removing the family from the public eye that many people are unaware that there were more Lindbergh children after that first, lost baby.

In fact, there were five of us: Jon, Land, Anne, Scott, and me. Although

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it is now more than twenty years since my father died, we are still directed by his strength of character. Although my mother is ninety-two years old, is often confused in her mind, and is in delicate health, we are still sustained by her gentleness.

THE SOLITARY

The room held, as if condensed, honey-olive shadows
from the canopy that stretched over bamboo
scaffolding across the window. Titles of books,
the rose pattern on an amulet, all the objects
not directly under the corner lamp were khaki-tinted,
hard to see. Just visible beyond a folding screen,
the bed had a dark, military air, as if the beige-brown
comforter were a hard, medieval pavis. The balcony,
with a southern exposure, was brighter, but blocked
by plants and stacks of books, so that it, too,
had the look of something fortified, a section
of a parapet, perhaps, or the lower half of a bartizan,
with a long, red, snakelike banner flying somewhere
on the roof. The Smith Corona, black under the lamp,
bore a jagged crack that extended from the "Shift" key
to a spot below the letter "V," legacy of an incident
whose details remain murky, except that it was
"defenestrated" one morning. (The word said
with a blithe, sideways glance, as if to challenge
the listener.) Then, in the middle of the room,
the great Bible on its wooden analogion,
built to specifications he carried with him from
country to country. So far: Russia, Arabia,
Senegal, China. I had barely enough time
on this, my only visit, to see where the bookmark,
a sandalwood dagger, flagged the day's meditation,
when he returned with a lacquer tray
and green tea in tiny porcelain cups decorated
with blue insects—"gadflies," he called them.
Later, I looked it up: "Ye shall be free indeed,"
the verses said, a flicker of light from the fortress.

—David Woo

HANGING in the family closet in Darien were a heavy military overcoat that I never saw my father put on, and a worn, light-tan leather jacket that he used when he was working at the far end of the driveway on fall afternoons, sawing, splitting, or chopping wood near the rhododendrons. There was also a navy zippered windbreaker that he wore in fall and spring, and an enormous, knee-length khaki-colored parka with a fur-lined hood—perhaps a relic of the polar flights he and my mother had taken over Alaska to Asia, in the thirties.

In the parka, he looked taller than ever, and even more determinedly adapted to adversity—a combination of Admiral Byrd and some intense, elongated Eskimo elder. He wore it only on rare, very cold days, when the cove was frozen over. My father's parka days were occasions for instruction. Whenever he wore this coat, we heard about the sub-zero Minnesota winters of his childhood, about the virtues of wood-burning stoves, kerosene lanterns, and Hudson Bay blankets, and about farmers who had perished between house and barn, as they tried to make their way to their cows through blinding snow. My father was full-hearted about extreme conditions. He eagerly—but never, he would remind us, foolishly—awaited the thunderstorms, floods, and blizzards that were heralded by urgent warnings on local radio stations. In preparation, he checked the thermometers, scanned the skies, roamed the property in his parka, and kept the household informed. He had on hand emergency food and water, flashlights, extra blankets, medical equipment, rubber rafts, snake-bite kits, and even a vial of morphine, which was probably illegal. "It's the unforeseen," he would warn us. "It's always the unforeseen."

There were few dangers in the Connecticut of my early childhood. Brambles and vines grew in profuse, obscuring tangles between our house and the road, and between our house and the Sound. This was wilderness by design. My father cleared the brush, but he always left enough of the woods alone so that from a boat in the cove or from a car on the road it would have been almost impossible for anyone to learn anything about our lives.

On autumn weekends, duck hunters concealed themselves in low-slung motorboats among the tall cattails along the shore, their presence betrayed by the shine of Evinrude motors. Once, I saw a boat and two men with shotguns lurking in our marsh grass, and ran back home to tell my father. Potential invasion was one of the few things that could rouse him from his office. I knocked on his door, and said, in a breathless voice, the words that always brought him to his feet: "Father, somebody is on our property!" He stopped typing, scraped back his chair from the desk, and opened the door to me, grim-faced and purposeful, demanding details. Then he told me to stay in the house and strode off in the direction of the marsh, already darkening like a thunderstorm. I don't know what my father said to the duck hunters, but by the time he came back I could just barely hear the sputtering putt of the Evinrude moving farther and farther away across the cove, until the boat finally disappeared.

MY father travelled a good deal of the time, as a consultant for Pan American Airways or for the United States government, and, later, in connection with his conservation work. When he came home from one of his trips, he wore a navy pin-striped suit and a gray fedora, and he carried a fat calfskin briefcase that also served him as a suitcase. Regardless of how long he was planning to be away, he packed exactly two of everything: trousers, socks, underwear, and blue drip-dry nylon shirts, which he had bought on purpose for travelling. He washed these out himself, in his hotel bathroom, then hung them up to dry in the window on two inflatable blue coat hangers. I still imagine my father's view of Paris or Rome or Istanbul as an obscured vision whose strangeness was made familiar to him through that lens of drip-dry nylon.

As a pilot, my father habitually kept comprehensive lists of his equipment and his flying procedures. He checked and rechecked them constantly to make sure that everything he did before, during, and after each flight was appropriate, and that the aircraft was kept in top condition. It was a habit that saved his life more than once, and it may have saved the lives of many fliers who followed him. My siblings and I found that our lives were also monitored by checklists—one per child.

Whenever my father returned to Connecticut, he would call me into his office within twenty-four hours, then look at the current list to see what was written under my name. All our names were there, each underlined at the head of its own column, in my father's neatly slanting pencilled print: Jon, Land, Anne, Scott, Reeve. Some of the columns were long; others were short. An item or two in each column had a check mark pencilled to the left of it, or a line drawn through the word entirely. Most, however, did not.

By the time my father had scanned my list, I knew what was on it. I had learned to read his lists upside down almost as soon as I could read at all. From where I was standing, I could accurately estimate how long it would be before I could leave. Were there specific, tangible items on the list, like "Rake left out in rain," which I could simply apologize for, or were they of a more general nature, like "Television watching" or "Chewing gum," which would require discussion? And woe betide me if there was something really big on my list, like "Freedom and Responsibility." Freedom and Responsibility were good for half an hour, and sometimes half an hour each.

There was also an "Instinct and Intellect" lecture, about appreciating nature, about using common sense, and about not getting carried away by contemporary trends, "fuzzy" ideas, or fancy advertising gimmicks. This lecture sometimes included a discussion of the unnecessary expense of modern toys, ending with "Why, when I was your age, I was perfectly happy to play all day with just a stick and a piece of string!"

At first, when my father came back from being away, I felt nothing but unbridled joy. I would leap down the stairs when I heard the big door open, and I would throw myself into his arms. It was a thrill to feel his tall shape again, and to breathe in the deep, sober scents of travel and gray hat and dark suit. He would give me a short, strong hug in return, accompanied by a happy grunt—"Whoof!"—as if my enthusiasm had knocked the air out of him.

Instead of asking me whether I had been good or bad during his absence, my father would feel my forehead with his fingers for "nubbins"—his word for the beginnings of devil's horns—and then reach around to my shoulder blades to see if I was growing any feathers, for angel wings. This always made me laugh, because I was ticklish, and I would quickly dissolve into generalized silliness.

My father would put a stop to that at once. "Now, now!" he'd say sharply. "Watch out for my hat!"

I would stop, crestfallen, and then I would remember what my father was really like. He loved his children, and he was equal to any real crisis, but he hated chatter and he hated chaos. He exercised affection and discipline in like measure, often at the same time. Our young German shepherd, Siggy, would rush to greet him, wriggling with uncontrollable adoration toward his outstretched hand, then writhe blissfully on the floor when the homecoming fingers caressed his head. But before long Siggy would draw back, as if in electric shock, at a stern, deep-voiced "Enough!"

My father's hat was not to be trifled with. When he was not travelling, he kept it on a high shelf in his narrow bedroom closet, which had a lower shelf for shoes and smelled pungently of cedar. The hat had its own spot, near a pile of white handkerchiefs and just behind a wooden box with a sliding cover, which contained the loose change my father stored there when he hung his pants in the closet. My sister, Anne, and I each pilfered this box more than once, when both the hat and its owner were far away.

Neither of us ever dared to take more than two or three coins at a time—a couple of nickels and a dime, or some pennies and one quarter, never

two. It wasn't worth the risk. I, at least, was so terrified that I was in real danger of wetting my pants, and leaving behind terrible evidence of my sin right on top of my father's shoes.

During these episodes, I would feel a rising nausea, a ringing in my ears, a pounding in my chest. I could see him—in Beirut or Munich or Anchorage—suddenly stand still, and then he would disappear in a cloud of smoke, just like the Wicked Witch of the West. In a flash, he would materialize again, right here in his own bedroom, his light-blue eyes cold and searing, like dry ice. He would stand before me in the full and towering knowledge that his own private and personal closet door had been opened, his own private and personal loose-change box invaded. And at that instant—what else could he do?—my father would strike me dead.

ONE day, I stood at the front door of our house with Anne, confronting a man who had knocked while the family was having lunch. I couldn't hear what the stranger—a thin young man—said to Anne, but I heard her cry out, and I saw her shut the door hard and fast in the man's face. Then, immediately, I heard my father's running footsteps. He opened the door and stepped outside with the stranger, putting his hands on Anne's shoulder and on mine as he passed, urging us back into the house. Before the door closed, I saw that he was walking down the path beside the young man, and that he had put a hand on the stranger's shoulder, too, and was talking to him gently and at length.

His face did not have the grim, closed-down look fatal to duck hunters. Instead, I saw kindness and the loose-featured patience with which he approached nervous dogs or very small children. He looked the way I saw him years later, in another house, gazing quietly down at a stray bird that had just flown into our kitchen windowpane and was lying stunned and twitching in his hand.

It turned out that the stranger on our doorstep was one of "the pretenders," as Anne called them. This man was one of a dozen or more confused, sad individuals who over the years have touched our lives now and then. Each of them is convinced that he, and nobody else, is the Lindbergh baby who died—our lost brother, Charles.

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I KNEW almost nothing about the kidnapping while I was growing up. I don't remember ever hearing my parents talk about it—not even once. And, although my mother occasionally spoke to me about the first child in our family, my father never did. He had been raised an only child, and I can imagine how much this baby—his namesake—must have meant to him. I also know that the loss was immeasurable, because, long after my father's death, I lost a child who was almost exactly the same age. Only then did I understand why I had never heard my father say the name of this brother of mine.

Although my brother Charles died from a blow to the head, I have always thought of his death as an accident. This may have been the way the story was presented to me by my mother. It was certainly, according to her diaries from the thirties, the assumption she held. I experience a kind of numb bewilderment every time I encounter a casual public reference to my brother's death. Not long ago, when my eleven-year-old son, Benjamin, was watching "The Simpsons," a character said, "I'm the Lindbergh baby—wah! wah! wah!" Benjamin asked me, "What's the Lindbergh baby?" I explained, not for the first time, what that old, sad story was, but then he asked me impatiently—he knew the history part—why the reference was on the show. I had no idea.

Over the years, I have come to know as much as most people do about the kidnapping and death of my brother, and about the arrest, trial, conviction, and ultimate execution of Bruno Hauptmann, the man accused of the crime. And yet I continue to believe that the baby died because of a mistake. Somebody, I reason, was crazy and greedy and an avid reader of newspapers. This person (or maybe persons) thought up what he believed to be a foolproof scheme for making money. He would take the well-publicized Lindbergh baby from his young parents by stealth and hold him for ransom. The parents were rich; they would surely pay. I imagine a scene, as in a movie thriller, going something like this:

The kidnapper, in ski mask and dark clothing, climbs through the window in the dead of night. He grabs the child from sleep and begins the climb back down the ladder. He grasps the child as if he were holding some object—a sack of flour, a block of wood. This is a child who has always been held in arms of love, and the baby struggles in protest. The little body works its way free. The kidnapper loses his grip. The child falls to instant death on the stones below. In my vision, all this happens in a matter of seconds. The baby passes from sleep to death so quickly that he never knows the difference.

People have suggested that when my father identified the remains of his first-born son he must have been in such a state of shock that he wasn't as meticulous as he would have been in other circumstances. I disagree. I believe that the more grief my father felt the more conscientiously he would have pursued the task at hand. He would have gone over his list of identifying marks—clothing, hair, teeth, a discrepancy in the bones of one foot. He would have reminded himself not to let his feelings interfere with his judgment, but those feelings, at white heat, would have illuminated and honed his judgment to its finest point, impelling him to search as far as possible for the truth. To seek truth in the tangible was not just something my father had learned as a farm boy, engineer, and pilot. It was a statement of faith, and, as such, it became the greatest strength he could offer his family during both the tranquil periods of our lives and the moments of disaster. Identifying his son's dead body was terrible, but it was also the truest, most intimate measure of who my father was.

More and more, I think of my brother Charles as a real child, rather than as simply a piece of history. I can do this partly because he is connected in my mind and heart with my own son, Jonathan, who died at the same age. Jonny also died in the night, and I—like my mother—was apart from my son during his last moments. I, too, thought that the baby was safely asleep in his crib. My son died of a seizure brought on by encephalitis, just a few weeks before his second birthday, while he and I were staying at my mother's house in

Connecticut. When I went to wake him up in the morning, I found him dead.

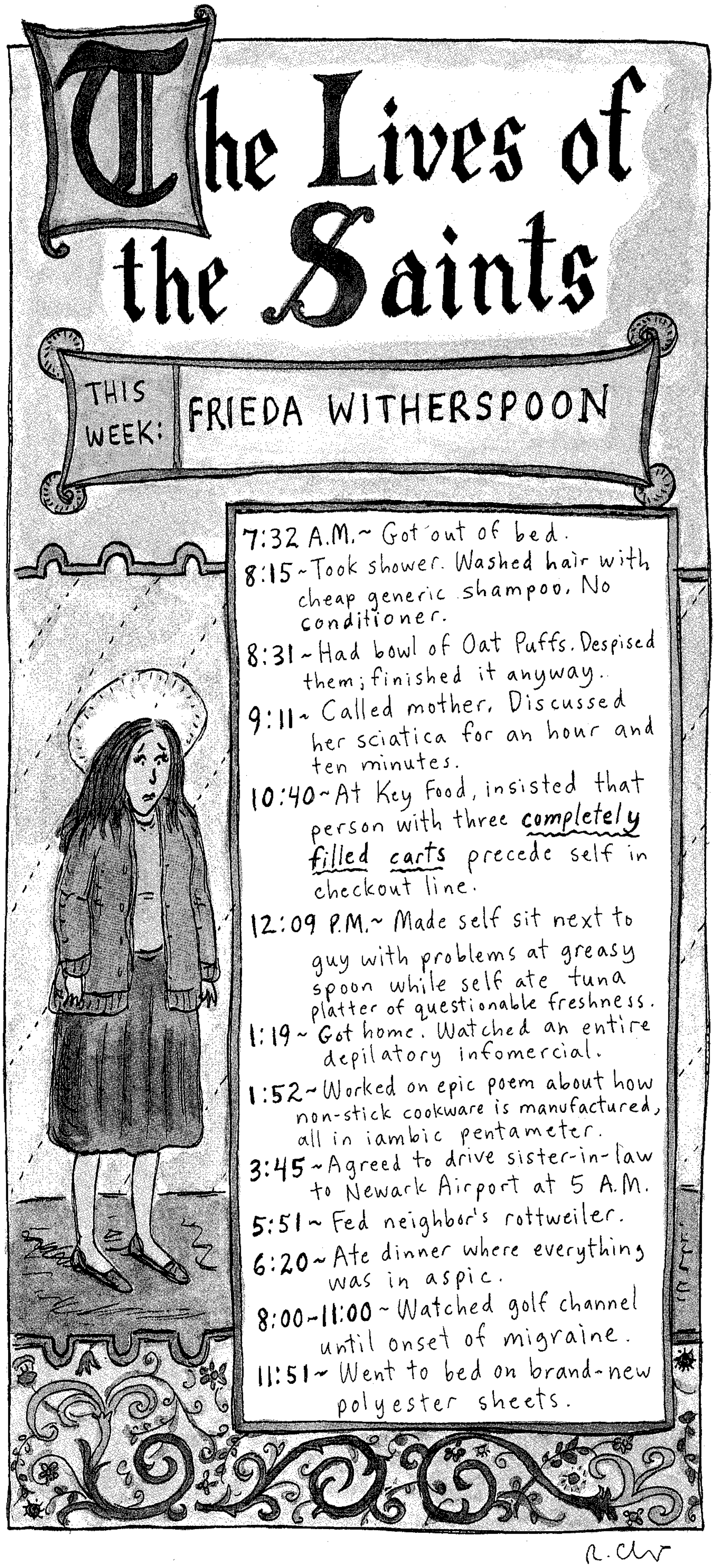
After we had called the local emergency squad—although the body was stiff and blue, and it was clear that Jonny had been dead for several hours—we notified the police, and the family, and the funeral home. Then, because my mother insisted upon it, she and I sat together with Jonny's body, in two chairs, next to the crib where he had gone to sleep the night before.

I wanted to scream and run from the room—anywhere, everywhere—but I didn't do it. My mother said, "I never saw my child's body after he died. I never sat with my son this way."

At that moment, I experienced a rush of family pride. It was a kind of insanity, but I was glad that my child and I had given this quiet time to my mother, who had not been able to have it when her own son died. His body, after identification, had been cremated, and my father had then scattered his ashes from the air.

"That was my baby," my mother said on one of her disoriented days, a year or two ago, pointing at a photograph of Jonathan that stood on the mantelpiece in the house of an old family friend. The friend looked distressed, but I did not protest. After all, whenever I read my mother's diaries from 1932, which were written thirteen years before I was born, I walk with her into Charles's nursery, and I look at his toys and his blankets, and I bury my face in his clothing.

THERE have been a number of people, including the young man who appeared at our door, who believe that the baby survived somehow—the result of a mysterious switch with another child, or of a Mafia plot, or of a secret, unfathomably complicated series of misfortunes that resulted in the "real" Lindbergh baby's growing up in the wrong family. Over the years, I have received letters from several men who are convinced that they are my long-lost brother, or from these men's relatives. Some have written passionate, lengthy communications, which include "proof" in the form of poems, articles, and miscellaneous quotations. One man sent me an incoherent collection of cut-and-pasted words from magazines and newspapers—a con-


The Lives of the Saints
THIS WEEK: FRIEDA WITHERSPOON
7:32 A.M. ~ Got out of bed.
8:15 ~ Took shower. Washed hair with cheap generic shampoo. No conditioner.
8:31 ~ Had bowl of Oat Puffs. Despised them; finished it anyway.
9:11 ~ Called mother. Discussed her sciatica for an hour and ten minutes.
10:40 ~ At Key Food, insisted that person with three completely filled carts precede self in checkout line.
12:09 P.M. ~ Made self sit next to guy with problems at greasy spoon while self ate tuna platter of questionable freshness.
1:19 ~ Got home. Watched an entire depilatory infomercial.
1:52 ~ Worked on epic poem about how non-stick cookware is manufactured, all in iambic pentameter.
3:45 ~ Agreed to drive sister-in-law to Newark Airport at 5 A.M.
5:51 ~ Fed neighbor's rottweiler.
6:20 ~ Ate dinner where everything was in aspic.
8:00-11:00 ~ Watched golf channel until onset of migraine.
11:51 ~ Went to bed on brand-new polyester sheets.

coction that looked eerily like the ransom notes from old movies, and was inspired, perhaps, by the kidnapping itself. Once, I opened an envelope full of bitter accusations against another Lindbergh-baby claimant, whom the writer wished to expose as a fraud.

One of the most haunting Lindbergh-baby letters was from someone in India, written in a cheerful and buoyant tone, with a kind of publisher's-clearing-house optimism. "Yes, Reeve!" it begins. "The search for your brother is finally over!" The writer says that, while everyone around him believes he is a native of Bombay, he is in fact Charles Lindbergh's lost son, and has undergone many medical transformations at the hands of his enemies to disguise his identity. He apologizes for not having responded earlier to what he refers to as "your family's desperate attempts to contact me." He ends with a polite message: "Please feel free to contact me at any time. Tell someone to wake me up, if required."

I am sometimes angered by these letters—why doesn't this craziness ever stop? But most often I am touched by them. What could have happened to these people? Where are their real families? Still, because I believe that it would be cruelly exploitative to do so, I have never written back.

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I WAS present at a symposium in 1986 when the writer and historian David McCullough spoke about the fact that so many of the early aviators "proved to be writers of exceptional grace and vision." He read aloud the first paragraph of "The Spirit of St. Louis":

> September, 1926
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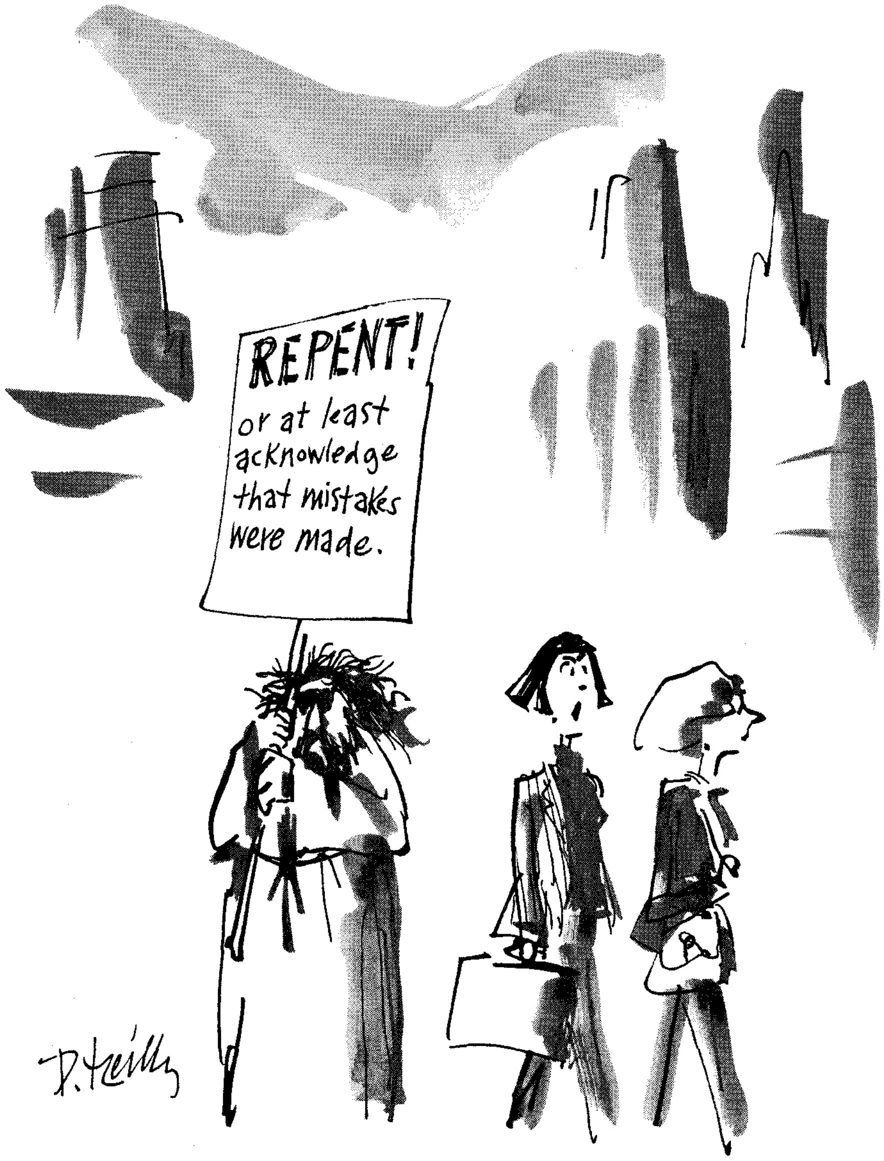
> Night already shadows the eastern sky. To my left, low on the horizon, a thin line of cloud is drawing on its evening sheath of black. A moment ago, it was burning red and gold. I look down over the side of my cockpit at the farm lands of Central Illinois. Wheat shocks are gone from the fields. Close, parallel lines of the seeder, across a harrowed strip, show where winter planting has begun. A threshing crew on the farm below is quitting work for the day. Several men look up and wave as my mail plane roars overhead. Trees and buildings and stacks of grain stand shadowless in the diffused light of evening. In a few minutes it will be dark, and I'm still south of Peoria.

I have heard speculation that my mother may have helped my father in the writing of "The Spirit of St. Louis," which took him fourteen years. I can confirm that she did. I have heard suggestions that my mother actually wrote some of the book herself, and I can attest that she did not. I don't think she could have if she had wanted to, despite my father's dedication, which reads, "To A.M.L., who will never know how much of this book she has written."

Each of my parents, I believe, was the single most important factor in the other's writing career. Nonetheless, they wrote separately, each with a distinct voice. They invariably read each other's manuscripts, and would offer suggestions, usually in the form of detailed notes—sometimes page after page of them. Quite often, the two would sit together in their bedroom with papers spread in piles on the double bed, and with the door closed, as they went over their notes for hours at a time. A child passing by would hear only a mumble of voices as one of them read a passage out loud to the other or a shuffling of papers as a notation was made, always in pencil. In our family, no comment was ever made in ink on a manuscript, and no note was made on another writer's manuscript. This would have been a serious violation of personal space.

"These are only suggestions," my father used to say before he began to read his notes aloud to my mother. My mother would sigh. My father's suggestions were usually logical, and were based on indisputable facts, but they could be wounding to a creative


REPENT!
or at least acknowledge that mistakes were made.
D. Reilly

"These days, everybody's so wishy-washy."

sensibility. He might say something like this: "Let's start by looking at page thirty, paragraph two, where you describe the cloud formations. I made a note here, because in my experience, in a situation following the storm you have described back on page twenty-eight, clouds of this type would not be formed. If you wanted, say, to bring in another weather system entirely, it might be possible to have your cloud shapes, if they are important to you. Now, my suggestion . . . and this is only a suggestion . . ."

My mother's suggestions to my father tended to be gently stylistic, having to do with commas and hyphens, or with the length of a sentence or a paragraph.

I do know that once, before I was born, my mother tried to change something her husband wrote—the ill-timed isolationist speech he made in Des Moines, Iowa, in 1941, in which he told the world that one of the greatest dangers to pre-Second World War America was the influence of Jews in prominent positions. It branded him forever, in some people's eyes, as anti-Semitic. As a child, I knew nothing about this speech. But when I got to Radcliffe, in 1963, I found out that the flight and the kidnapping were much less interesting to other students than my father's prewar activities were. Some of my friends confessed that they were surprised to find out that they liked me, considering that my father was a Fascist.

Fascist? How could people think such a thing? What did they mean?

"I think you'd better read that Des Moines speech," my closest friend said. So I found it, and I read it. I was devastated. I can still feel the sick dizziness that came over me when I encountered my father's words. "The leaders of both the British and the Jewish races, for reasons which are as understandable from their viewpoint as they are inadvisable from ours, for reasons which are not American, wish to involve us in the war," my father had pointed out that night. He also said, "A few far-sighted Jewish people . . . stand opposed to intervention. But the majority still do not. Their greatest danger to this country lies in their large ownership and influence in our motion pictures, our press, our radio, and our Government." The words were completely familiar to me, and completely alien at the same time, because I understood what he was saying in two different ways. I understood his language, because I knew it as well as my own. But I had grown up after the war, and it was through Anne Frank's diary that I had come to understand the implications that my father's words could—and did—carry for so many people. Reading that speech, I was as angry with him as I have ever been in my life, and I wanted to weep for him at the same time.

I knew that he was not capable of the ethnic slurs or racial jokes I had heard at the homes of other suburban-Connecticut children in the fifties. I never heard him talk that way, and I did not find this kind of poison in his Des Moines speech. I found something else, and I could not forgive him for it. All the same, I knew what my father was doing. He was doing what he always did: identifying a situation as he saw it, point by point, and then clarifying it, in his logical way, and then proceeding with his argument in an orderly fashion. The three groups advocating war, he told his 1941 audience, were the British, the Roosevelt Administration, and the Jews. He explained why he thought that each group had taken the position it held, and he argued that each group was mistaken.

He talked to the American people about isolationism, about the pros and cons of war, and about the persecution of Jews in Germany (he spoke before the magnitude of this persecution became known, but I wasn't aware of that then, and I was too horrified to care), in the way that he talked to his children about Freedom and Responsibility, or the Seven Signs of Frostbite, or Punk Design. But how could he have been so insensitive? Was he somebody else in 1941? Did I know my father at all?

"If only he had listened to me," my mother said when I asked her later. "I told him what would happen if he listed 'interventionist' groups in that way—'the British,' 'the Roosevelt Administration,' and 'the Jews.' I told him he would be called anti-Semitic."

"What did he say?" I demanded.

"He said, 'But I'm not!' "

"And what did you say?"

"I said, 'It doesn't matter. That's what will happen.' But he didn't believe me."

This surprised me. I thought he always believed her. But she said that things had been different earlier in their marriage. She said that it had been his habit for so long, growing up so alone, to listen only to himself. He had learned to rely on his own judgment, and this had been critical for him, because his survival often depended upon following his instincts. This self-reliance was the reason for the success of his 1927 flight. "If he had listened to others, he never would have got to Paris," my mother explained.

This was not a good enough explanation for me, and perhaps it was not a good enough explanation for my mother, either. I know that my father's Des Moines speech, and the furor it created, still caused her distress whenever she spoke about it, even many years after his death. I know that for me it is a source of anguish and ambivalence to this day. I cannot read my father's words without feeling their implied—if not intended—anti-Semitism. I also cannot believe he was anti-Semitic—not as I knew him, not when I knew him.

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When my father died, in Hawaii, in August of 1974, it was a long time before I accepted his death. I knew that he was dying that summer—just as I knew, twenty years later, in the beginning of a gray winter, that my sister Anne was dying, of melanoma. Still, it seemed impossible that either of them would actually die. Maybe they couldn't believe it, either. My father, weeks before his death, told my brother Scott that he thought he had an "outside chance" of beating the lymphatic cancer that had invaded his body—invaded it so completely that the doctors could not treat it anymore.

Because I was pregnant with my second child, I was unable to be with my father when he died, on the island of Maui, where my parents had built a home when my father was doing conservation work for the World Wildlife Fund and other organizations in the South Pacific. Nonetheless, in my diary I charted his journey into death:

August 17, 1974. They are going to Maui. Mother called last night, here, to say that was what he wanted to do. Tonight he called us himself.... Slow, tired, but unmistakably him. He said his condition was "very serious," and that he wasn't afraid of death. Given a choice, he said, he'd say no to it, but since he had no choice he wasn't apprehensive. And even though the doctors made a fuss at his wanting to leave the hospital, he said it was a "philosophical decision."... Dr. Howell has found him a cottage to rent near the Hana hospital.... I hope he gets there.

August 24, 1974. He did, of course. Safely and comfortably flew to Maui with Mother and all the brothers, counter to the doctors' warnings and predictions—how delighted he must have been at confounding them! They refused even to give him a certificate to leave the hospital and fly, but Sam Pryor [a friend] got the United Airlines doctor to do it—and he has been in Maui a week with very little change in his condition.

Scott says he seems to be having quite a good time. But also that he's bullying Mother, which is very painful for her. Getting into those speeches that go "I told you over and over and over again..." and making odd requests. He still thinks there is a chance he'll pull through this, Scott says, but he doesn't want to be unprepared.... Mother called... to try to get hold of a "Hudson Bay" blanket that he wants to be buried in. Scott says there was a long discussion among all the men about whether he should have a cowhide in with him, too.... How typical of him to turn obnoxious, just when we were all getting so sentimental.

August 26, 1974. Father died at 7:15 this morning, Maui time—"very peacefully," after a full night's sleep under some sedation. Last night he apparently had trouble breathing, and asked for more oxygen, and for sedation to make his body relax. "I'm not afraid" is what Land told me he said, "but my body is afraid."

In his last days, my father entered into preparations for the future with great gusto. He talked over possible hymns for his funeral, and he liked having my mother sing them to him—auditioning them, as it were. "That one's too corny," he told her emphatically when she thought he was asleep. He also had elaborate discussions with carpenters about the coffin he wanted to be buried in, and, of course, he monitored the gravedigging arrangements: he wanted a traditional Hawaiian grave that was wide and deep and full of stones. My father was in charge, right up to the end. ♦

Charles and Anne Lindbergh, mapping air routes for the aviation industry in the pla

UPI/CORBIS-BETTMANN

ey flew from Maine to Asia in 1931, two years after their marriage: From the beginning, they were considered unlikely partners.

FICTION

BEFORE THE CHANGE

How could she not have known?

BY ALICE MUNRO

DEAR R.,

My father and I watched Kennedy debate Nixon. He's got a television since you were here. A small screen and rabbit ears. It sits out in front of the sideboard in the dining room, so that there's no easy way now to get at the good silver or the table linen, even if anybody wanted to. Why in the dining room, where there's not one really comfortable chair? Because it's a while since they've remembered they have a living room.

Do you remember this room? Heavy side curtains with wine-colored leaves on a beige ground and the net curtains in between. Picture of Sir Galahad leading his horse and picture of Glencoe with a herd of red deer instead of the massacre. The old filing cabinet moved in years ago from my father's office but still no place found for it, so it just sits there, not even pushed back against the wall. And my mother's closed sewing machine (the only time he ever mentions her, when he says "your mother's sewing machine") with the same or what looks like the same array of plants, in clay pots or tin cans, not flourishing and not dying.

So I'm home now. Nobody has broached the question as to how long for. I just stuffed the Mini with all my books and papers and clothes and drove here from Ottawa in one day. I had told my father on the phone that I was finished with my thesis (I've actually given it up, but I didn't bother telling him that) and that I thought I needed a break.

"Break?" he said, as if he'd never heard of such a thing. "Well. As long as it isn't a *nervous* break."

That's the way he still refers to panic attacks and depression and personal collapse. Nervous breakdown.

There wasn't any big welcome when I got here, but no consternation, either. I'd thought of kissing him—more bravado than an upsurge of affection, more this-is-the-way-I-do-things-now. But by the time my shoes hit the gravel I knew I couldn't. There was Mrs. B. standing halfway between the drive and the kitchen door. So I went and threw my arms around her instead and nuzzled the bizarre black hair cut in a Chinese sort of bob around her small withered face. I could smell her stuffy cardigan and bleach on her apron and feel her old toothpick bones. She hardly came up to my collarbone.

Flustered, I said, "It's a beautiful day, it's been the most beautiful drive." So it was. So it had been. The trees not turned yet, just rusting at the edges, and the stubble fields like gold. So why does this benevolence of landscape fade in my father's presence and in his territory?

When the debate was over, my father got up and turned off the television. He won't watch a commercial unless Mrs. B. is there and speaks up in favor. Whatever she enjoys is permitted, even dancing cornflakes, and he may even say, "Well, in its own way it's clever." This I think is a kind of warning to me.

What did he think about Kennedy and Nixon?

"Aw, they're just a couple of Americans."

I tried to open the conversation up a bit.

"How do you mean?"

"Just a couple of Americans," he said, as if the words might have got by me the first time.

So we sit there not talking but not in silence, because, as you may recall, he is a noisy breather.

R. THE waiting-room walls are scuffed all round where generations of patients have leaned their chairs back against them. The *Reader's Digests* are in rags on the table. The patients' files are in cardboard boxes under the examining table. And in the house it's no better.

I asked what color paint he'd like for the office walls. Light green, I said, or light yellow?

He said, "Who's going to paint them?"

"I am."

"I never knew you were a painter."

"I've painted places I've lived in."

"Maybe so. But I haven't seen them. What are you going to do about my patients while you're painting?"

"I'll do it on a Sunday."

"Some of them wouldn't care for that when they heard about it."

"Are you kidding? In this day and age?"

"It may not be quite the same day and age you think it is. Not around here."

All I got to do in the end was throw out the *Reader's Digests* and put out some copies of *Maclean's* and *Time* and *Saturday Night*. And then he mentioned there'd been complaints. They missed looking up the jokes they remembered in the *Reader's Digests*.

"Too bad," I said, and I couldn't believe that my voice was shaking.

Then I tried to tackle the filing cabinet in the dining room. I thought it was probably full of the files of patients who were long dead. Mrs. B. saw what I was doing and went and got my father. Not a word to me.

He said, "Who told you you could go poking around in there? I didn't."

R. THE two days you were here last year Mrs. B. was off for Christmas with her family. (She has a husband who has been sick with emphysema it seems for half his life, and no children, but a horde of nieces and nephews and connections.) I don't think you saw her at all. But she saw you. She said to me yesterday, “Where's that Mr. So-and-So you were supposed to be engaged to?” She'd noticed I wasn't wearing my ring.

“I imagine in Toronto,” I said.

“I was up at my niece's last Christmas and we seen you and him walking up by the standpipe and my niece said, ‘I wonder where them two are going.’ ” This is exactly how she talks and it already sounds quite normal to me except if I write it down. I guess the implication is that we were going somewhere to carry on, but if you remember we were just getting outside so we could continue our fight, which could only be bottled up for so long.

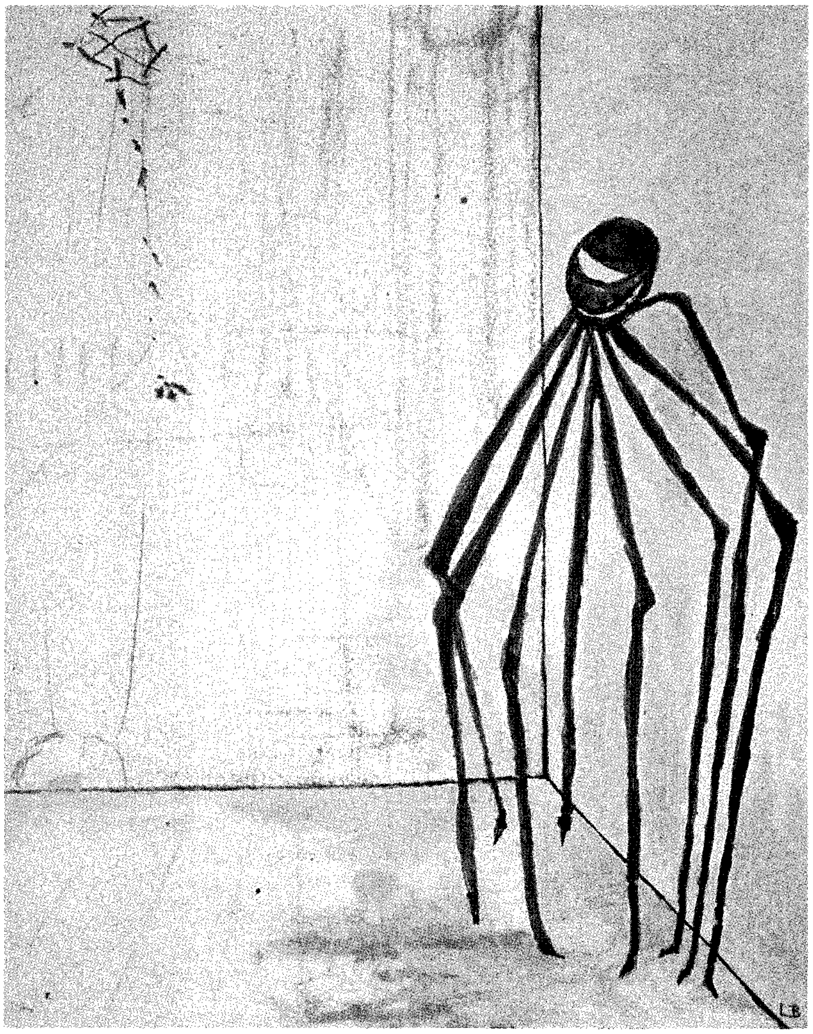
Mrs. B. started to work for my father about the same time I went away to school. Before that we had some young women I liked, but they left to get married, or to work in war plants. When I was nine or ten and had been to some of my school friends' houses, I said to my father, “Why does Mrs. Barrie have to eat with us? Other people's maids don't eat with them.”

My father said, “If you don't like to eat with Mrs. Barrie you can go and eat in the woodshed.”

Then I took to hanging around and getting her to talk. She wouldn't, much. But when she did it could be rewarding. I had a fine time imitating her at school.

Me: “Your hair is really black, Mrs. Barrie.”

Mrs. B.: “Everyone in my family is got black hair. They all got black hair and it never ever gets gray. That's on my mother's side. When my grandpa died they kept him in the place in the cemetery all winter while the ground was froze and come spring they was going to put him in the ground and one or other us says, ‘Let's take a look-see how he made it through the winter.’ So we got the fellow to lift the lid and there he was with his face not dark or caved in or anything and his hair was black.”



“SPIDER” (1994) BY LOUISE BOURGEOIS; COURTESY CHEIM & READ

I could even do the little laughs she does, little barks, not to indicate that anything is funny but as a kind of punctuation. By the time I met you I'd got sick of myself doing this.

After Mrs. B. told me all that about her hair, I met her one day coming out to the upstairs bathroom. She was hurrying to get the phone, which I wasn't allowed to answer. Her hair was bundled up in a towel and a dark, purplish trickle was running down the side of her face.

“Your head's bleeding,” I said, and she said, “Oh, get out of my road,” and scrambled past to get the phone. I went on into the bathroom and saw purple streaks in the basin and the hair dye on the shelf. Not a word was said about this, and she continued to talk about how everybody on her mother's side of the family had black hair in their coffins and she would, too.

My father had an odd way of noticing me in those years. He might be passing through a room where I was and he'd say as if he hadn't seen me there:

“The Chief Defect of Henry King
Was chewing little bits of String.”

Or, “Solomon Grundy, born on Monday—” And then he'd jab a finger at me to take it up.

“Christened on Tuesday—”

“Married on Wednesday—”

“Took ill on Thursday—”

“Worse on Friday—”

“Died on Saturday—”

“Buried on Sunday—”

Then both together, thunderously: “And that was the end of Solomon Grundy!”

Never any introduction and no comment afterward. For a joke I tried calling him Solomon Grundy. The fourth or fifth time, he said, “That's enough. That's not my name. I'm your father.”

After that we probably didn't do the rhyme anymore.

The first time I met you on the campus, and you were alone and I was alone, you looked as if you remembered me but weren't sure about acknowledging it. You had just taught that one class, filling in when our regular man was sick and you had to do the lecture on logical positivism. You joked about its being a funny thing to bring somebody over from the Theological College to do.

You seemed to hesitate about saying hello, so I said, “The former King of France is bald.”

That was the example you'd given us of a statement that makes no sense because the subject doesn't exist. But you

Wm Hamilton

"I'm sorry, but Chef Scott feels he's moved beyond that concept."

• •

gave me a truly startled and cornered look that you then covered up with a professional smile. What did you think of me?

A smart-aleck.

R. My stomach is still a little puffy. There are no marks on it, but I can bunch it up in my hands. Otherwise I'm O.K. My weight is back to normal or a little below. I think I look older, though. I think I look older than twenty-four. Anyway, I've started going on long walks around town, for exercise. The horse barns have been torn down, and there are new suburbs that could be suburbs anywhere, which is what everybody likes about them. Nobody walks now, everybody drives. The suburbs don't have sidewalks, and the sidewalks along the old back streets are unused and cracked and uptilted by frost and disappearing under earth and grass. The long dirt path under the pine trees along our lane is lost now under drifts of pine needles and rogue saplings and wild-raspberry canes. People have walked up that path for decades to see the doctor. Because there's been a doctor living in this house since the end of the last century.

All sorts of noisy, grubby patients, children and mothers and old people, all afternoon and quieter patients coming singly in the evenings. I used to sit out where there was a pear tree trapped in a clump of lilac bushes, and I'd spy on them, because young girls like to spy. I'd spy on the ladies who got dressed up, at that time, for a visit to the doctor. I remember the clothes from soon after the war. Long full skirts and cinch belts and puffed-up blouses and sometimes short white gloves, for gloves were worn then in summer and not just to church. Hats not just to church, either. Pastel straw hats that framed the face. Not having a mother may have had something to do with how I felt. But I didn't know anybody who had a mother who looked the way they did. I'd crouch under the bushes eating the spotty yellow pears and worshipping.

One of our teachers had got us reading old ballads, like "Patrick Spens" and "The Twa Corbies," and there'd been a rash of ballad-making at school:

I'm going down the corridor
My good friend for to see
I'm going to the lav-a-to-ry
To have myself a pee.

So with my mouth full of mushy pear I made up more:

A lady walks on a long long path
She's left the town behind.
She's left her home and her father's wrath
Her destiny for to find.

When the wasps started bothering me too much I went into the house. Mrs. Barrie would be in the kitchen, smoking a cigarette and listening to the radio, until my father called her. She stayed till the last patient had left and the place had been tidied up. If there was a yelp from the office she might give her own little yelping laugh and say, "Go ahead and holler." I never bothered describing to her the clothes or the looks of the women I'd seen, because I knew she'd never admire anybody for being beautiful or well dressed. Any more than she'd admire them for knowing something nobody needed to know, like a foreign language. Good card players she admired, and fast knitters—that was about all. Many people she had no use for. My father said that, too. He had no use. That made me want to ask, If they did have a use, what would the use be? But I knew neither one would tell me. Instead they'd tell me not to be so smart:

His Uncle came on Franklin Hyde
Carousing in the Dirt.
He Shook him hard from Side to Side
And Hit him till it Hurt.

If I decided to send all this to you where would I send it? When I think of writing the whole address on the envelope I am paralyzed. It's too painful to think of you in the same place with your life going on in the same way, minus me. And to think of you not there, you somewhere else but I don't know where, is worse.

Dear Robin,

How do you think I didn't know? It was right in front of my eyes all the time. If I had gone to school here, I'd surely have known. If I'd had friends. There's no way one of the high-school girls, one of the older girls, wouldn't have made sure I knew.

Now that I think of it, I knew that some of those evening patients, those ladies, came on the train. I associated them and their beautiful clothes with the evening train. And there was a late-night train they must have left on.

Of course there could just as easily have been a car that dropped them off at the end of the lane.

And I was told—by Mrs. B., I think, not by him—that they came to my father for vitamin shots. I know that, because I would think, Now she's getting her shot, whenever we heard a woman make a noise, and I would be a little surprised that women so sophisticated and self-controlled were not more stoical about needles.

Even now, it has taken me weeks. Through all this time spent getting used to the ways of the house, to the point where I would never dream of picking up a paintbrush and would hesitate to straighten a drawer or throw out an old grocery receipt without consulting Mrs. B., who can never make up her mind about it anyway.

At lunch today, Sunday, my father laid a check beside my plate. Mrs. Barrie is never here on Sundays. We have a cold lunch of sliced meat and bread and tomatoes and pickles and cheese, which I fix when my father gets back from church. He never asks me to go to church with him—probably thinking that would just give me a chance to air some views he doesn't care to hear.

The check was for five thousand dollars.

"That's for you," he said. "So you'll have something. You can put it in the bank or invest it how you like. See how the rates are. I don't keep up. Of course you'll get the house, too. All in the fullness of time, as they say."

A bribe? I thought. Money to start a little business with, go on a trip with? Money for the down payment on a little house of my own, or to go back to university to get some more of what he has called my unnegotiable degrees?

Five thousand dollars to get rid of me.

I thanked him, and more or less for conversation's sake I asked him what he did with his money. He said that was neither here nor there.

"Ask Billy Snyder if you're looking for advice." Then he remembered that Billy Snyder was no longer in the accounting business; he had retired.

"There's some new fellow there with a queer name," he said. "It's like Ypsilanti, but it's not Ypsilanti."

"Ypsilanti is a town in Michigan," I said.

"It's a town in Michigan, but it was a man's name before it was a town in Michigan," my father said. It seems it was the name of a Greek leader who fought against the Turks early in the eighteen-hundreds.

I said, "Oh. In Byron's war."

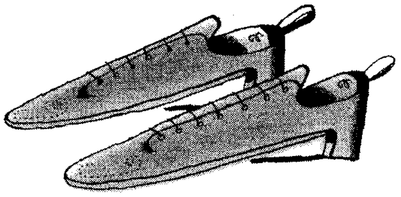
"Byron's war?" said my father. "What makes you call it that? Byron didn't fight in any war. He died of typhus. Then once he's dead he's the big hero, he died for the Greeks, and so on." He said this contentiously, as if I had been one of those responsible for this mistake, this big fuss over Byron. But then he calmed down and recounted for me, or recalled for himself, the progress of the war against the Ottoman Empire. It's always best not to interrupt. When he starts to talk like this there's the sense of a truce, or a breathing spell, in an undeclared underground war. I was sitting facing the window, and I could see through the net curtains the heaps of yellow-brown leaves on the ground, in the rich generous sunlight (maybe the last of those days we'll get for a long while by the sound of the wind tonight), and it brought to mind my relief as a child, my secret pleasure, whenever I could get him going, by asking a question or by accident, on a spiel like this.

Last night I came in at about ten o'clock. I'd been out at a meeting of the Historical Society, or, rather, at a meeting to try and organize one. Five people showed up, and two of them walked with canes. When I opened the kitchen door I saw Mrs. B. framed in the doorway to the back hall—the hall that leads from the office to the washroom and the front part of the house. She had a covered basin in her hands. She was on her way to the washroom and she could have gone on, passing the kitchen as I came in. I would hardly have noticed her. But she stopped in her tracks and stood there, partly turned toward me. She made a grimace of dismay.

Uh-oh. Caught out.

Then she scurried away toward the toilet.

This was an act. The surprise, the dismay, the hurrying away. Even the way she held the basin out so that I had to notice it. That was all deliberate.



I could hear the rumble of my father's voice in the office, talking to a patient. I had seen the office lights on anyway. I had seen the patient's car parked outside.

I took off my coat and went on upstairs. All I seemed to be concerned about was not letting Mrs. B. have it her way. No questions, no shocked realization. No what is that you have in the basin, Mrs. B., oh what have you and my daddy been up to? (Not that I ever called him my daddy.) I got busy at once rooting around in one of the boxes of books I still hadn't unpacked. I was looking for the journals of Anna Jameson. I had promised it to the other person under seventy who had been at the meeting. A man who is a photographer and knows something about the history of Upper Canada. He would like to have been a history teacher but has a stammer that prevented him. He told me this in the half hour we stood out on the sidewalk talking instead of taking the more decisive step of going for coffee. As we said good night he told me that he'd like to have asked me for coffee, but he had to get home and spell his wife because the baby had colic.

I unpacked the whole box of books before I was through. It was like looking at relics from a bygone age. I looked through them till the patient was gone and my father had taken Mrs. B. home and had come upstairs and used the bathroom and gone to bed. I read till I was so groggy I almost fell asleep on the floor.

At lunch today I finally said, "I think I know what's going on here."

His head reared up and he snorted. He really did, like an old horse.

"You do, do you? You think you know what?"

I said, "I'm not accusing you. I don't disapprove."

"Is that so?"

"I believe in abortion," I said. "I believe it should be legal."

"I don't want you to use that word again in this house."

"Why not?"

"Because I am the one who says

what words are used in this house."

"You don't understand what I'm saying."

"I understand that you've got too loose a tongue. You've got too loose a tongue and not enough sense. Too much education and not enough ordinary brains."

I still did not shut up. I said, "People must know."

"Must they? There's a difference between knowing and yapping. Get that through your head once and for all."

We did not speak for the rest of the day. I don't think he finds this difficult at all. I cooked the usual roast for dinner and we ate it and did not speak. It's obviously time that I got out of here.

The young man last night told me that when he felt relaxed his stammer practically disappeared. Like when I'm talking to you, he said. I could probably make him fall in love with me, to a certain extent. I could do that just for recreation. That is the sort of life I could get into here.

DEAR R.,

I haven't left—the Mini wasn't fit for it. I took it in to be overhauled. Also the weather has changed, the wind has got into an autumn rampage, scooping up the lake and battering the beach. It caught Mrs. Barrie on her own front steps—the wind did—and knocked her sideways and shattered her elbow. It's her left elbow and she said she could work with her right arm, but my father told her it was a complicated fracture and he wanted her to rest for a month. He asked me if I would mind postponing my departure. Those were his words—postponing your departure. He hasn't asked where I'm planning to go, and I don't know.

I said all right, I'd stay while I could be useful. So we're on decent speaking terms—in fact, it's fairly comfortable. I try to do just about what Mrs. B. would do, in the house. I cook the meat and the vegetables in her way and never think about bringing home an avocado or a jar of artichoke hearts or a garlic bulb, though I see all those things are now for sale in the supermarket. I hold the oven door shut the way Mrs. B. does, with a couple of heavy medical textbooks set on a stool pushed up against it. I make the coffee from the powder in the jar.

I'm allowed to answer the phone, but if it's a woman asking for my father and not volunteering details, I'm supposed to take the number and say that the doctor will phone back. So I do, and sometimes the woman just hangs up. When I tell my father this he says, "She'll likely call again."

There aren't many of those patients, the ones he calls the "specials"—maybe one a month. Mostly he's dealing with sore throats and cramped colons and bealing ears and so on. Jumpy hearts, kidney stones, sour digestions.

R. TONIGHT he knocked on my door. He knocked though it wasn't all the way closed. I was reading. He asked—not in a supplicating way of course but I would say with reasonable respect—if I could give him a hand in the office.

The first special since Mrs. B. has been away.

I asked what he wanted me to do.

"Just more or less to keep her steady," he said. "She's young and she's not used to it yet. Give your hands a good scrub, too. Use the soap in the bottle in the toilet downstairs."

The patient was lying flat on the examining table with a sheet over her from the waist down. The top part of her was fully dressed in a dark-blue buttoned-up cardigan and a white blouse with a lace-trimmed collar. These clothes lay loosely over her sharp collarbone and nearly flat chest. Her hair was black, pulled tightly back from her face and braided and pinned on top of her head. This prim and severe style made her neck look long and emphasized the regal bone structure of her white face, so that from a distance she could be taken for a woman of forty-five. Close up you could see that she was quite young, probably around twenty. Her pleated skirt was hung up on the back of the door. I could see the rim of white panties that she had thoughtfully hung underneath.

She was shivering hard though the office wasn't cold.

"Now, Madeleine," my father said. "The first thing is we've got to get your knees up."

I wondered if he knew her. Or did

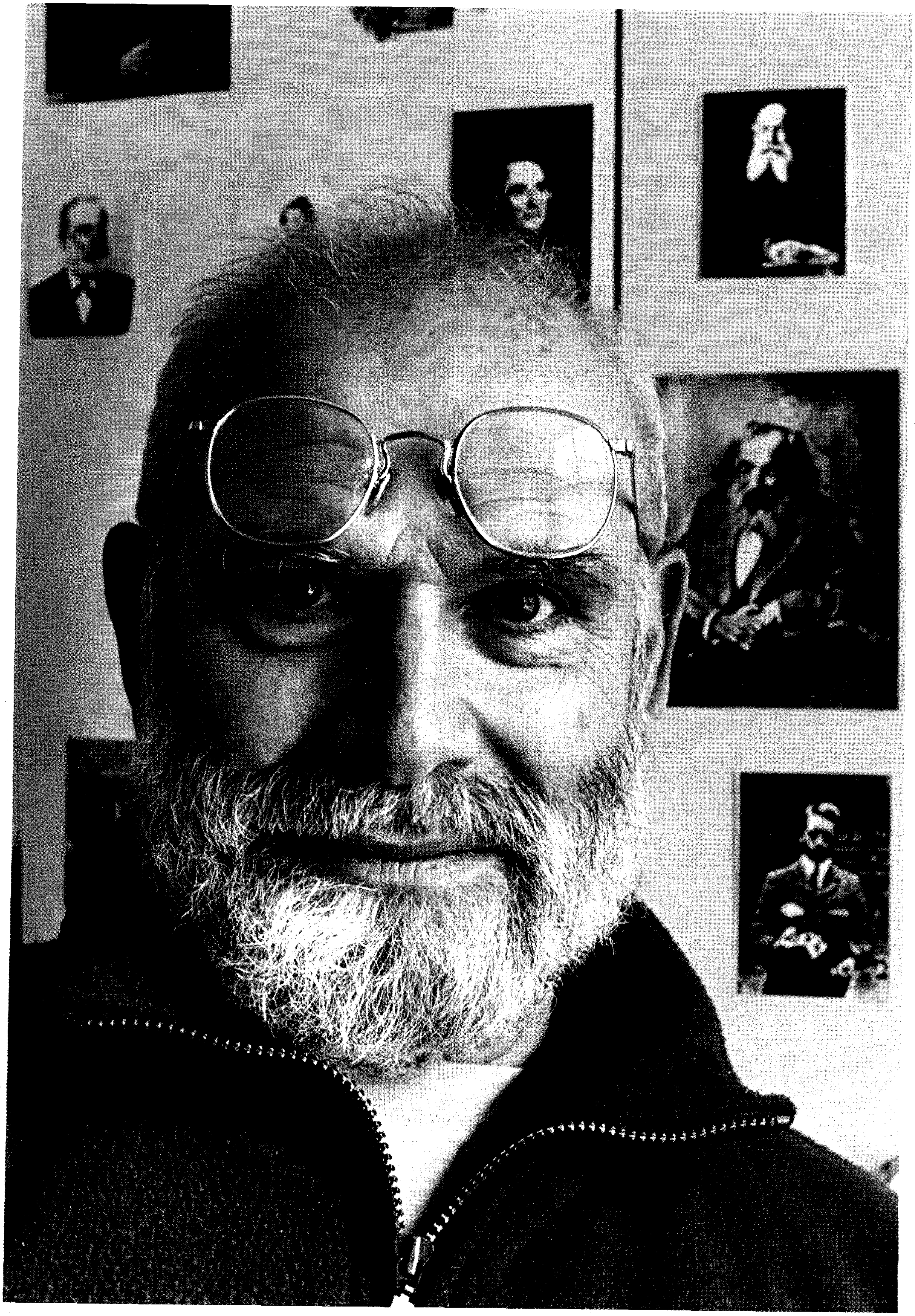
SHOWCASE
BY HELMUT NEWTON

MIND READER

"I'M a rather shy person. I tend to avoid large groups of people, and often feel like an outsider." So begins the concluding episode of "Oliver Sacks: The Mind Traveller," to be broadcast on PBS from August 25th through September 15th. In this series on the mysteries of the brain, Sacks interviews those whose neurological impairments both constrict and enhance their experience of the world. The confession of diffidence, however, is made not by a patient but by the eminent and deeply empathic neurologist himself.

Sacks may be a doctor, but his investigations extend into the realms of the philosopher and the nineteenth-century novelist: his curiosity is not just an appealing quality but a moral imperative. Is it his own "impairment"—his shyness, and a corresponding absence of arrogance—that allows this invariably cherubic, bemused inquisitor to engage so fully with his subjects? In one episode of the series, while visiting a summer camp for people with Usher syndrome (born deaf, with degenerative vision), Sacks observes the residents communicating through touch, which leads him to wonder whether they develop compensatory tactile-linguistic powers once their visual powers have atrophied; whether the visual cortex might be "reallocated" for tactile processing. "You can sometimes forget how central language is to being human," he says. "Human beings can't live without language, can't live without communication, and they will create it—somehow!"

Even among the autistic—with their obsessions and inflexible rituals, designed to cope with the chaos that threatens to engulf them—Sacks searches out common ground. Since we come into the world with nothing to guide us, he says, we are all forced to create order or to accept order of one kind or another: "One might say that science itself, and civilization and art, are all about different orderings of the world—to contain it, and to make it in some sense intelligible, communicable. And bearable." —MARY HAWTHORNE



he just ask for a name and use whatever the woman gave him?

"Easy," he said. "Easy. Easy." He got the stirrups in place and her feet into them. She was still wearing her loafers. Her knees shook so much in this new position that they clapped together.

"You'll have to hold steadier than that," my father said. "You know, now, I can't do my job unless you do yours. Do you want a blanket over you?"

He said to me, "Get her a blanket. Off the bottom shelf there."

I arranged the blanket to cover the top part of Madeleine's body. She didn't look at me. Her teeth rattled. She clenched her mouth shut.

"Now, just slide down this way a bit," my father said. And to me, "Hold her knees. Get them apart. Just hold her easy."

I put my hands on the knobs of the girl's knees and moved them apart as gently as I could. My father's breathing filled the room with its busy unintelligible comments. I had to hold Madeleine's knees quite firmly to keep them from jerking together.

"Where's that old woman?" she said.

I said, "She's at home. She had a fall. I'm here instead."

So she had been here before.

"She's rough," she said.

Her voice was matter-of-fact, almost a growl, not so nervous as I would have expected from the agitation of her body.

My father had picked up a thin rod like a knitting needle.

"Now. This is the hard part," he said. He spoke in a conversational tone, milder I think than any I have ever heard from him. "And the more you tighten up the harder it will be. So just—easy. There. Easy. Good girl. Good girl."

I was trying to think of something to say that would ease her or distract her. I could see now what my father was doing. Laid out on a white cloth on the table beside him he had a series of rods, all of the same length but of a graduated thickness. These were what he would use, one after the other, to open and stretch the cervix. From my station behind the sheeted barrier beyond the girl's knees, I could not see the actual, intimate progress of these instruments. But I could feel it, from the arriving waves of pain in her body that beat down the spasms of apprehension and actually made her quieter.

Where are you from? Where did you go to school? Do you have a job? (I had noticed a wedding ring, but quite possibly they all wore wedding rings.) Do you have any brothers or sisters?

Why should she want to answer any of that, even if she weren't in pain?

She sucked her breath back through her teeth and widened her eyes at the ceiling.

"I know," I said. "I know."

"Getting there," my father said. "You're a good girl. Good quiet girl. Won't be long now."

I said, "I was going to paint this room, but I never got around to it. If you were going to paint it, what color would you choose?"

"Hoh," said Madeleine. "Hoh." A sudden startled expulsion of breath. "Hoh. Hoh."

"Yellow?" I said. "I thought a light yellow. Or a light green?"

By the time we got to the thickest rod Madeleine had thrust her head back into the flat cushion, stretching out her long neck, and stretching her mouth, too, lips wide and tight over her teeth.

"Think of your favorite movie. What is your favorite movie?"

A nurse said that to me, just as I reached the unbelievable interminable plateau of pain and was convinced that relief would not come, not this time. How could movies exist anymore in the world? Now I'd said the same thing to Madeleine and Madeleine's eyes flicked over me with the coldly distracted expression of someone who sees that a human being can be about as much use as a stopped clock.

I risked taking one hand off her knee and touched her hand. I was surprised at how quickly and fiercely she grabbed it and mashed the fingers together. Some use after all.

"Now, then," my father said. "Now we're someplace."

She had closed her eyes.

I thought I was going to be afraid of dying because of my mother dying that way, in childbirth. But once I got onto that plateau I found that dying and living were both irrelevant notions, like favorite movies. I was stretched to the limit and convinced that I couldn't do a thing to move what felt like a giant egg or a flaming planet, not like a baby at all. It was stuck and I was stuck, in a space and time that could just go on forever—there was no reason that I should ever get out, and all my protests had already been annihilated.

MRS. DUMPTY

The last time the doctors gave up,
I put the pieces together
and bought him a blue wool jacket, a shirt,
and a tie with scribbles of magenta,
brown buckle shoes. I dressed him
and sat him down
with a hankie in his pocket, folded into points.
Then a shell knit slowly
over his sad starched heart.

He'd laugh and dangle his long legs and call out,
What a fall that was!
And I'd sing the refrain,
What a fall!

And now he's at my door again, begging
in that leaky voice,
and I start wiping the smear
from his broken face.

—Chana Bloch

"Now I need you," my father said. "I need you round here. Get the basin."

I held in place the same basin that I had seen Mrs. Barrie holding. I held it while he scraped out the girl's womb with a clever sort of kitchen implement. (I don't mean that it *was* a kitchen implement but that it had a slightly homely look to me.)

The lower parts of even a thin young girl can look large and meaty in this raw state. In the days after my labor, in the maternity ward, women lay carelessly, even defiantly, with their fiery cuts or tears exposed, their black-stitched wounds and sorry flaps and big helpless haunches. It was a sight to see.

Out of the womb now came plops of wine jelly, and blood, and somewhere in there the fetus. Like the bauble in the cereal box or the prize in the popcorn. A tiny plastic doll as negligible as a fingernail. I didn't look for it. I held my head up, away from the smell.

"Bathroom," my father said. "There's a cover." He meant the folded cloth that lay beside the soiled rods. I carried the basin along the hall to the downstairs toilet, dumped the contents, flushed twice, rinsed the basin and brought it back. My father by this time was bandaging up the girl and giving her some instructions. He's good at this job, I thought; he does it well. But his face looked heavy, weary enough to drop off the bones. It occurred to me that he had wanted me here, all through the procedure, in case he should collapse.

If he had collapsed I don't know what I'd have done.

He patted Madeleine's legs and told her she should lie flat.

"Don't try to get up for a few minutes," he said. "Have you got your ride arranged for?"

"He's supposed to've been out there all the time," she said, in a weak but spiteful voice. "He wasn't supposed to've gone anyplace."

My father took off his smock and walked to the window of the waiting room.

"You bet," he said. "Right there." He let out a complicated groan, said, "Where's the laundry basket?," remembered that it was back in the bright room where he'd been working, came back and deposited the smock, and said to me, "I'd be very obliged if you could tidy this up." Tidy up meant doing the sterilizing and mopping up in general.

"Good," he said. "I'll say good night now. My daughter will see you out when you're ready to go." I was somewhat surprised to hear him say "my daughter" instead of my name. Of course I'd heard him say that before. If he had to introduce me, for instance. Still, I was surprised.

Madeleine swung her legs off the table the minute he was out of the room. Then she staggered and I went to help her. She said, "O.K., O.K., just got offa the table too quick. Where'd I put my skirt—I don't want to stand around looking like this."

I got her the skirt and panties off the back of the door and she put them on without help but very shakily.

I said, "You could rest a minute. Your husband will wait."

"My husband's working in the bush up near Kenora," she said. "I'm going up there next week. He's found a place we can stay. Now, I laid my coat down somewheres," she said.

My favorite movie—as you ought to know and if I could have thought of it when the nurse asked me—is "Wild Strawberries." I remember the moldy little theatre where we used to see all those Swedish and Japanese and Indian and Italian movies and I remember that it had recently switched over from showing "Carry On" movies, and Martin and Lewis, but the name of it I can't remember.

Since you were teaching philosophy to future ministers, your favorite movie should have been "The Seventh Seal," but was it? Actually, I think it was Japanese and I forget what it was about. Do you remember those fervent conversations we used to have when we walked home from the theatre those couple of miles—about human love and selfishness and God and faith and desperation? When we got to my rooming house we had to shut up. We had to go softly, softly up the stairs to my room.

Ah, you would say gratefully and wonderingly as you got in.

I would have been very nervous about bringing you here last Christmas

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if we hadn't already been deep into our fight. I would have felt too protective of you to expose you to my father.

But in fact you got along pretty well together. You had a discussion about some great conflict between different orders of monks in the seventh century, wasn't that it? The row those monks had was about how they should shave their heads.

A curly-headed beanpole was what he called you. Coming from him that was almost complimentary.

When I told him on the phone that you and I would not be getting married after all, he said, "Uh-oh. Do you think you'll ever manage to get another one?" If I'd objected to his saying that he would naturally have said it was a joke.

MRS. BARRIE is back. She's back in less than three weeks, though it was supposed to have been a month. But she has to work shorter days than she did before. It takes her so long to get dressed and to do her own housework that she seldom gets here (delivered by her nephew or her nephew's wife) until around ten o'clock in the morning.

"Your father looks poorly" was the first thing she said to me. I think she's right.

"Maybe he should take a rest," I said.

"Too many people bothering him," she said.

The Mini is out of the garage and the money is in my bank account. What I should do is take off. But I think, What if we get another special? How can Mrs. B. help him? She can't use her left hand yet, and she could never hold on to the basin with just her right hand.

R. THIS day was after the first big snowfall.

It all happened overnight and in the morning the sky was clear blue, there was no wind, and the brightness was preposterous. I went for an early walk, under the pine trees. The highway had already been plowed and so had our lane. Some cars went by, in and out of town, as on any other morning. Before I went back into the house I just wanted to see if the Mini would start, and it did. I stomped my boots free of snow outside the back door and reminded myself that I must put a broom out. The kitchen had filled up with the day's blast of light.

I thought I knew what my father would say.

"Out contemplating nature?"

He was sitting at the table with his hat and coat on. Usually by this time he had left to see his patients in the hospital.

He said, "Have they got the road plowed yet? What about the lane?"

I said that both were plowed and clear. I put the kettle on and asked if he'd like another cup of coffee before he went out.

"All right," he said. "Just so long as it's plowed so I can get out."

"What a day," I said.

"All right if you don't have to shovel yourself out of it."

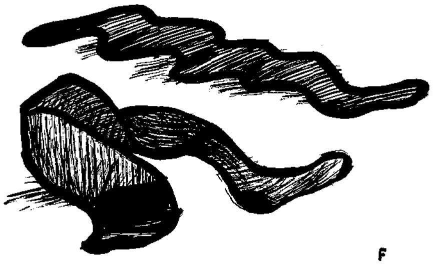
I made the two cups of coffee and then I sat down, facing the window and the incoming light. He sat at the end of the table. He'd shifted his chair so that the light was at his back. I couldn't see what the expression on his face was, but his breathing kept me company as usual.

I started to tell my father about myself. I hadn't intended to do this at all. I had meant to say something about my going away. But I opened my mouth and things began to come out that I heard with equal amounts of dismay and satisfaction, the way you hear the things you say when you are drunk.

"You never knew I had a baby," I said. "I had it on the seventeenth of July. In Ottawa. I've been thinking how ironical that was."

I told him that the baby had been adopted right away and that I didn't know whether it had been a boy or a girl. That I had asked not to be told. And I had asked not to have to see it.

"I stayed with Josie," I said. "You remember me speaking about my friend Josie. She's in England now, but she was all alone then in her parents' house. Her parents had been posted to South Africa. That was a godsend."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I told him you were the father of the baby, in case he wondered. And that since you and I were already engaged, even officially engaged, I had thought that all we had to do was get married.

But you thought differently. You said that we had to find a doctor. A doctor who would give me an abortion.

He did not remind me that I was never supposed to say that word in his house.

I told him that you had said we could not just go ahead and get married, because anybody who could count would know that I had been pregnant before the wedding. We could not get married until I was definitely not pregnant anymore.

Otherwise you might lose your job at the Theological College. They could bring you up before a committee that might judge you as morally unfit. Morally unfit for the job of teaching young ministers. And even supposing this did not happen, that you were only reprimanded, or were not even reprimanded, you would still never be promoted, there would be a stain on your record. Even if nobody said anything to you, they would have something on you, and you could not stand that. The new students coming in would hear about you from the older ones, there'd be jokes passed on.

Surely not, I'd said.

Oh yes. Never underestimate the meanness there is in people's souls. And for me, too, it would be devastating. The wives controlled so much, the older professors' wives. They'd never let me forget. Even when they were being kind—especially when they were being kind.

But we could just pick up and go somewhere else, I said. Somewhere where nobody would know.

They'd know. There's always somebody who makes sure that people know.

Besides, that would mean you'd have to start at the bottom again. You'd have to start at a lower salary, a pitiful salary, and how could we manage with a baby, in that case?

I was astonished at these arguments, which did not seem to be consistent with the ideas of the person I loved. The books we had read, the movies we had seen, the things we had talked about—I asked if that meant nothing to you. You said of course it did, but this was life.

It was winter, like now. January or February. We were walking away from the rooming house. I threw my diamond ring on the street and it rolled under a parked car. But the battle dragged on after that. I was supposed to find out about an abortion from a friend who had a friend who was rumored to have had one. I'd given in, I said I'd do it. But then I lied, I said the doctor had moved away. Then I admitted lying. I can't do it, I said.

But was that because of the baby? Never. It was because I believed I was right in the argument.

I had contempt. I had contempt when I saw you scrambling to get under the parked car, with the tails of your overcoat flapping around your buttocks. You were clawing in the snow to find the ring and you were so relieved when you found it. You were ready to hug me and laugh, thinking I'd be relieved, too, and we'd make up on the spot. I told you you would never do anything admirable in your whole life.

Hypocrite, I said. Sniveller. Philosophy teacher.

Not that that was the end. For we did make up. But we didn't forgive each other. And we didn't take steps. And then it got to be too late and we just walked away from each other. And that was a relief for us both. And also a kind of victory.

"So isn't that ironic?" I said to my father. "Considering?"

I could hear Mrs. Barrie outside stomping her boots, so I said this in a hurry. My father had sat all the time rigid with embarrassment, so I thought, or with profound distaste.

Mrs. Barrie opened the door saying, "Ought to get a broom out there—" Then she cried out, "What are you doing sitting there? What's the matter with you? Can't you see the man's dead?"

He wasn't dead. What she had seen—and what I would have seen, even against the light, if I had not been avoiding looking at him whilst I told my tale—was that he had suffered a blinding and paralyzing stroke. He sat tilted slightly forward, the table pressing into the firm curve of his stomach. When we tried to move him from his chair, we managed only to jar him, so that his head came down on the table with a majestic reluctance. His hat stayed on. And his coffee cup stayed in place a couple of inches from his unseeing eye. It was still about half full.

I said we couldn't do anything with him—he was too heavy. I went to the phone and called the hospital, to get one of the other doctors to drive out. There's no ambulance yet in this town. Mrs. B. paid no attention to what I said. She gave me the look of a spitting cat and kept pulling at my father's clothes, undoing buttons and yanking at the overcoat and grunting and whimpering with the exertion.

A doctor came. He and I together were able to pull my father out to the car and get him into the back seat. I got in beside him to keep him from toppling over. The sound of his breathing was more peremptory than ever and seemed to be criticizing whatever we did. But you could take hold of him now and shove him around, and manage his body as you had to, and this seemed very odd.

Mrs. B. had fallen back and quieted down as soon as she saw the other doctor. She didn't even follow us out of the house to see my father loaded into the car.

This afternoon he died. At about five o'clock. I was told it was very lucky for all concerned.

I WAS full of other things to say just when Mrs. Barrie came in. I was going to say to my father, What if the law should change? The law might change soon, I was going to say. Maybe not, but it might. He'd be out of business then. Or out of one part of his business. Would that make a great difference to him? Would he find some other risk, some other knot to make in his life, some other underground and problematic act of mercy?

What could I expect him to answer?

"Speaking of business, that is none of yours."

But if that law could change, other things could change. I'm thinking about you now, how it could happen that you wouldn't be ashamed to marry a pregnant woman. There'd be no

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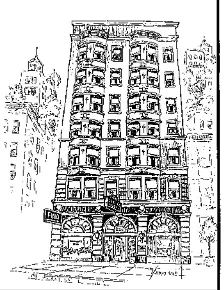

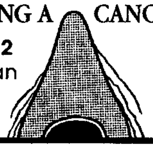
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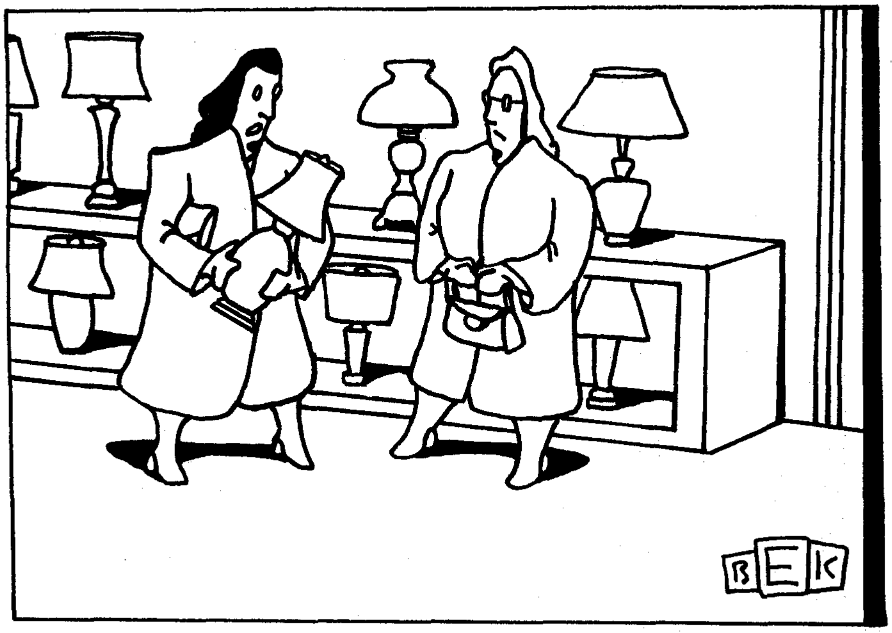

"It's very me, but I hate myself."

• •

shame to it. Move ahead a few years, just a few years, and it could be a celebration. The pregnant bride is garlanded and led to the altar, even in the chapel of the Theological College.

R. THERE'S enough money in my father's bank account to cover his funeral expenses. Enough to bury him, as they say. But there isn't much more. There are no stock certificates in his safe-deposit box and no record of investments. Nothing. No bequest to the hospital, or to his church. Most shocking of all, there is no money left to Mrs. Barrie. The house and its contents are mine. And that's all there is. I have my five thousand dollars.

My father's lawyer seems embarrassed, painfully embarrassed and worried about this state of affairs. Perhaps he thinks I might suspect him of misconduct. Try to blacken his name. He wants to know if there's a safe in my (my father's) house, any hiding place at all for a large amount of cash. I say there isn't. He tries to suggest to me—in such a discreet and roundabout way that I don't know at first what he's talking about—that there might be reasons for my father's wanting to keep the amount of his earnings a secret. A large amount of cash holed away somewhere is therefore a possibility.

"Perhaps you could go home and take a very good look," he says. "Don't neglect the obvious places. It could be in a cookie tin. Or in a box under the bed. Surprising the places people can pick. Even the most sensible and intelligent people."

"Or in a pillow slip," he's saying as I go out the door.

A WOMAN on the phone wants to speak to the doctor.

"I'm sorry. He's dead."

"Have I got the right doctor?"

"Yes, but I'm sorry, he's dead."

"Is there anyone— Does he by any chance have a partner I could talk to? Is there anybody else there?"

"No. No partner."

"Could you give me any other number I could call? Isn't there some other doctor that can—"

"No. I haven't any number. There isn't anybody that I know of."

"You must know what this is about. It's very crucial. There are very special circumstances—"

"I'm sorry."

"There isn't any problem about money. Please try to think of somebody. If you do think of somebody later on, could you give me a call? I'll leave you my number."

"You shouldn't do that."

"I don't care. I trust you. Anyway, it's not for myself. I know everybody must say that, but really it's not. It's for my daughter, who's in a very bad condition. Mentally she's in a very bad condition."

"I'm sorry."

"If you knew what I went through to get this number, you would try to help me."

"Sorry."

"Please."

"I'm sorry."

"PERHAPS he didn't always charge," I say to the lawyer. "Perhaps he worked for nothing sometimes."

The lawyer is getting used to me now. He says, "Perhaps."

"Or possibly an actual charity," I say. "A charity he supported without keeping any record of it."

The lawyer holds my eyes for a moment.

"Well, I haven't dug up the cellar floor yet," I say, and he smiles wincingly at this levity.

Mrs. Barrie hasn't given her notice. She just hasn't shown up. There was nothing in particular for her to do, since the funeral was in the church and the reception was in the church hall. She didn't come to the funeral. None of her family came. So many people were there that I wouldn't have noticed, if someone hadn't said to me, "I didn't see any of the Barrie connection, did you?"

I phoned her several days afterward and she said, "I never went to the church because I had too bad a cold."

I said that that wasn't why I'd called. I said I could manage quite well but wondered what she planned to do.

"Oh, I don't see no need for me to come back there now."

I said that she should come and get something from the house, a keepsake. I wanted to tell her I felt bad about the money. But I didn't know how to say that.

She said, "I got some stuff I left there. I'll be out when I can."

She came out the next morning. The things she had to collect were mops and pails and scrub brushes and a clothes basket. It was hard to believe she would care about retrieving articles like these. And hard to believe she wanted them for sentimental reasons, but maybe she did. They were things she had used for years—during all her years in this house.

"Isn't there anything else?" I said. "For a keepsake?"

She looked around the kitchen, chewing on her bottom lip. She might have been chewing back a smile.

"I don't think there's nothing here I'd have much use for," she said.

I had a check ready for her. I just needed to write in the amount. I hadn't been able to decide how much of the five thousand dollars to share with her. A thousand? Now that seemed shameful. I thought I'd better double it.

I got out the check, which I had hidden in a drawer. I found a pen. I made it out for four thousand dollars.

"This is for you," I said. "And thank you for everything."

She took the check in her hand and glanced at it and stuffed it in her pocket. I thought maybe she hadn't been able to read how much it was for. Then I saw the darkening flush, the tide of embarrassment, the difficulty of being grateful.

She managed to pick up all the things she was taking, using her one good arm. I opened the door for her. I was so anxious for her to say something more that I almost said, "Sorry that's all."

Instead I said, "Your elbow's not better yet?"

"It'll never be better," she said. She ducked her head as if she were afraid of another of my kisses. She said, "Well-thanks-very-much-goodbye."

I watched her making her way to the car.

But it was not the usual car. The thought crossed my mind that she might have a new employer. Bad arm or not. A new and rich employer. That would account for her haste, her cranky embarrassment.

But it was the nephew's wife who got out to help with the load. I waved, but she was too busy stowing the mops and pails.

"Gorgeous car," I called out, because I thought that was a compliment both women would appreciate. I didn't know what make it was, but it was new and large and glamorous. A silvery lilac color. Shivering in my indoor clothes, I stood there and waved the car out of sight. I couldn't settle down to do anything after that.

I decided to go out skiing. I put on the old wooden skis that my father used to wear in the days when the back roads were not plowed out in winter and he might have to go across the fields to deliver a baby or take out an appendix. There were only cross-straps to hold your feet in place.

I skied back to the gravel pits at the back of our property. The slopes have been padded with grass over the years and now they're covered with snow. There were dog tracks and bird tracks, but no sign of humans. I went up and down, up and down. I fell now and then on the fresh plentiful snow, and between one moment of falling and the next of getting to my feet I found out that I knew something.

I knew where the money had gone.

Gorgeous car.

A charity.

And four thousand dollars out of five.

SINCE that moment I've been happy. I have the feeling of seeing money thrown over a bridge or high up into the air. Money, hopes, love letters—all such things can be tossed into the air. The thing I can't imagine is my father caving in to blackmail. Particularly not to people who wouldn't be very credible or clever. Not when the whole town seems to be on his side, or at least on the side of silence.

What I can imagine, though, is a grand perverse gesture. To forestall demand, maybe, or just to show he didn't care. Looking forward to the lawyer's shock, and to my trying even harder to figure him out, once he was dead.

No. I don't think he'd be thinking of that. I don't think I'd have come into his thoughts so much. Never so much as I'd like to believe.

What I've been shying away from is that it could have been done for love. Never rule that out.

I CLIMBED out of the gravel pit and as soon as I came out on the fields the wind hit me. Wind was blowing snow over the resolute dog tracks and the faint circles made by a skittering vole and the trail that will likely be the last ever to be broken by my father's skis.

Dear Robin— What should be the last thing I say to you?

Goodbye and good luck.

I send you my love.

(What if people really did that—sent their love through the mail to get rid of it? What would it be that they sent? A heap of roses still more fragrant than rotten. A package wrapped in bloody newspaper that nobody would want to open.)

Take care of yourself.

Remember—the present King of France is bald. ♦

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THE FROG AND THE CROCODILE

Love letters from the woman behind "The Second Sex."

BY JOAN ACOCELLA

> I love you. But do I deserve your love if I do not give you my life? . . . May I love [a man] and tell him I love him without intending to give my whole life if he asked for it? Will he never hate me?

HE will hate her. As we find out in "A Transatlantic Love Affair" (New Press; $27.50), a collection of Simone de Beauvoir's letters to Nelson Algren, the affair between these two writers was only a few months old when Algren asked Beauvoir to come live with him. He was a novelist of the Chicago school, a naturalist, a bard of the taverns and the poker dens. He could not leave his city, his subject matter, to join Beauvoir in Paris. But he saw no reason why she, who by this time (1947) had written considerably more than he—three novels, a play, and two books of philosophy, all of them woven on the intellectual life of Paris—should not move to Chicago to be with him. In the above passage she is explaining to him that this will not happen.

Coming from the now famous feminist, such a refusal seems fitting. She needed her career, her independence. But a major reason Beauvoir could not give her life to Algren was that she had already given it to another man, Jean-Paul Sartre. The resulting struggle in her mind—work and Sartre on one side, love and Algren on the other—was to affect all her future writings, most notably "The Second Sex." This is the most interesting thing about "A Transatlantic Love Affair": the light it sheds on the book that marked the beginning of the modern women's movement. Beauvoir later claimed that when she started work on "The Second Sex," in 1946, she had no sense that women were systematically kept down. She came to realize it only as she began her research. I would suggest that the crucial research took place in Nelson Algren's bed. That Beauvoir, after seventeen years with Sartre, had no sense of the unequal division of power between the sexes is staggering, but Algren taught her the truth.

The depressing facts of Beauvoir's fifty-year relationship with Sartre have been known for some time now, at least since Deirdre Bair's excellent 1990 biography of Beauvoir. Sartre and Beauvoir became lovers in 1929, when she was twenty-one and he twenty-four, soon after both had completed the philosophy program at the École Normale Supérieure. They made a pact, designed by Sartre. Their relationship would be, for both of them, their "essential" love, but they would be permitted "contingent" loves as well. Furthermore, they would practice "transparency": each would tell the other the details of these adjunct relationships. Not surprisingly, the arrangement turned out to be one-sided. She didn't want anyone but him. He wanted every woman in sight. He soon lost interest in Beauvoir physically; her share of his sex life was to listen to his accounts of his lovemaking with others. She was then supposed to tell him her reactions, and analyze them for him. Short of physical battery, a more sadomasochistic arrangement is hard to imagine.

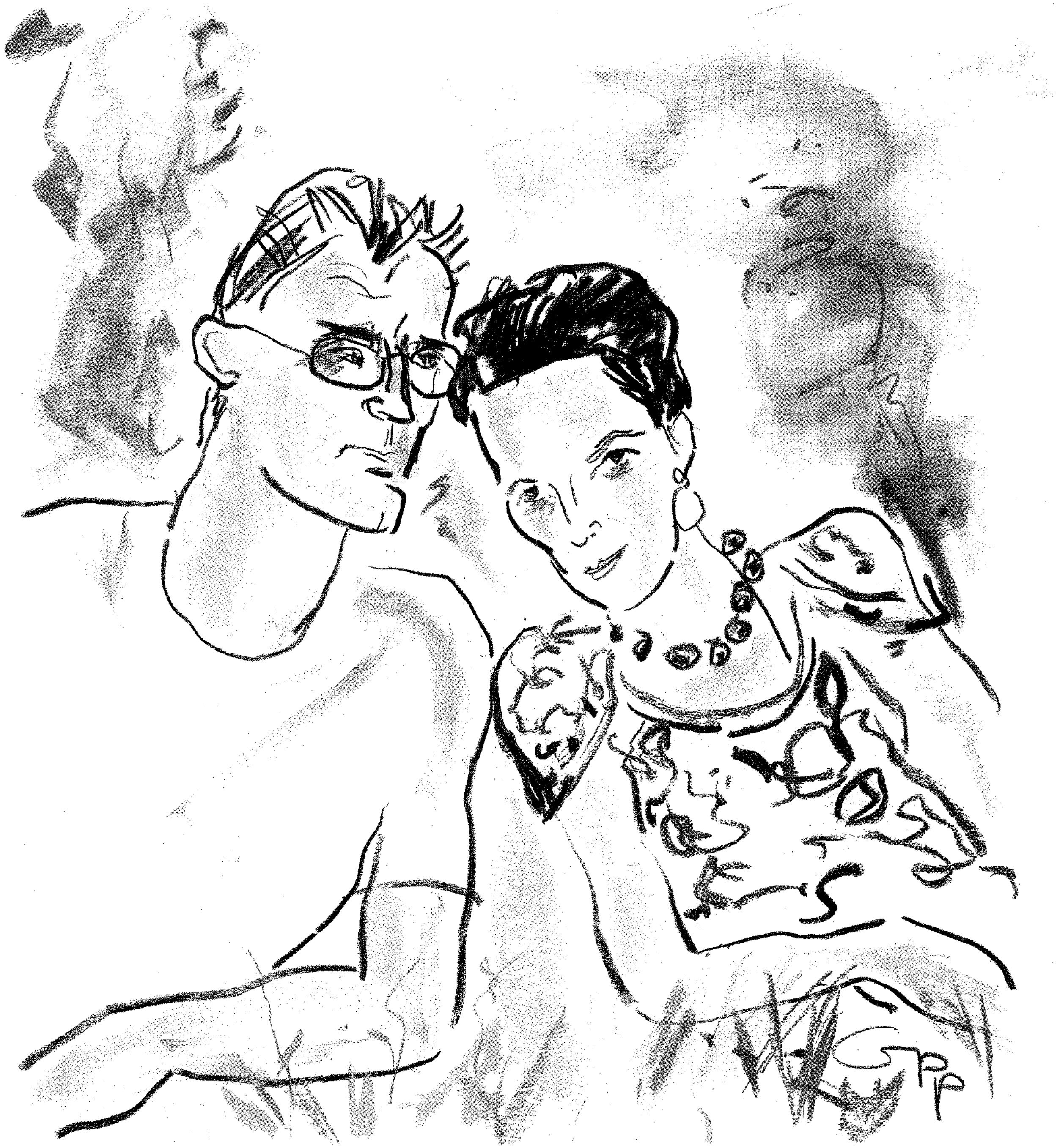
But it was worse. Sartre was not the sort of man whom women naturally ran after. He was less than five feet tall, with a walleye and a tic that made him shrug his shoulders and roll his head uncontrollably. Furthermore, he was reportedly a big disappointment in bed. When he was older, and famous, he had no trouble attracting women, but in his earlier years he did suffer refusals. So Beauvoir helped out. When, early in her career, she worked as a *lycée* teacher, she would use her own bed as a holding pen for girls to offer up to him. Eventually, she laid hands on a girl with a mother energetic enough to go to the *lycée* director and get Beauvoir fired. (She never taught again—a good thing.) Later, when she had a car, she drove him to appointments with his multiple mistresses.

This is not to speak of her services to his career. "His work was more important than mine," she once said. "Naturally I bowed to this." She talked him through his writings, outlined them for him, critiqued them, edited them, occasionally wrote them. Bair describes the scenario:

> Often he practically pushed her into one of the booths at the Dôme or the Rotonde, fussing until she had her coffee, her bottle of ink, and the pile of papers neatly shuffled and ready for editing, and then he hurried off to a meeting in Saint-Germain followed by his liaison with Olga, Wanda or whoever else it might be that day. Sometimes he left Beauvoir with little more than a hastily scrawled text and the peremptory demand to "deal with this."

Beauvoir was willing, for this made her, as she saw it, the central woman in Sartre's life, whatever the incursions of others. Meanwhile, she went on with her own writing (she was an utterly dogged worker), but that, too, was laid at Sartre's feet. In "The Second Sex," as she frankly stated in her introduction, she took his existentialism as her point of view: her chief complaint about the condition of women was not that they weren't happy but that they weren't free—that they lacked the capacity for "transcendence" (of circumstances, of biology), that greatest of Sartrean goods. Most of her other books also disseminated his views, to the point where some people regarded her simply as his publicist. "Notre-Dame de Sartre," "La Grande Sartreuse," her detractors called her.

This servitude to Sartre damaged not just her reputation but also her self-esteem and her femininity, which were already precarious. Beauvoir was a brilliant, bookish child, and in her haut-bourgeois Parisian family these were not regarded as female traits. "Simone has a man's brain," her father said. "She *is* a man." Simone took the hint and turned herself into the furthest thing possible from a woman, or at least from her convent-bred, needlepoint-doing mother. She was loud, rude, slovenly, tyrannical. (If she didn't get her way, she



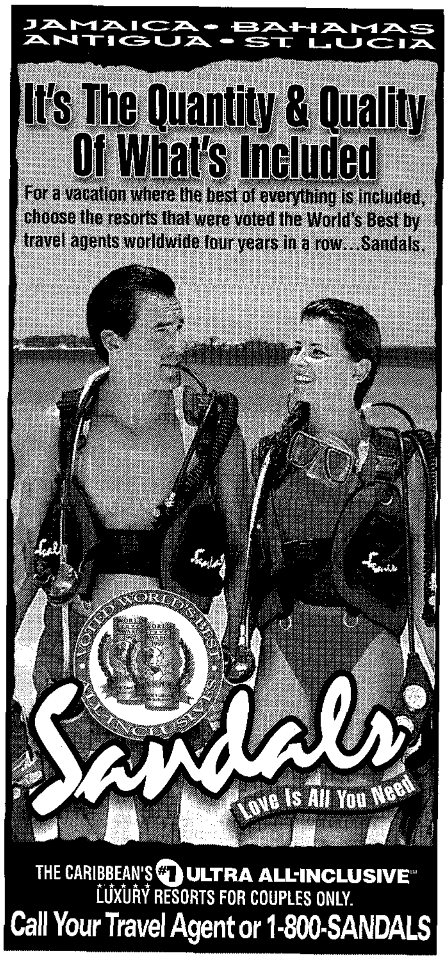
Algren and Beauvoir: the American street kid enjoyed romancing the French existentialist, and vice versa.

GLADYS PERINT PALMER

would vomit.) She cared about nothing but her work. As she entered into adulthood, the relationship with Sartre no doubt confirmed her in these habits. She developed a hard, humorless manner. She also became one of the worst-dressed women in Paris. ("We always know when it's summer," Algren later said. "We tell Simone . . . to take off the navy-blue wool dress and put on the cotton one.") No longer Sartre's mistress, she became his spinster sister. Small wonder that his existentialism, with its anguished freedom, appealed to her. But she acknowledged no anguish. Though she apparently had anxiety attacks all her life and would suffer violent crying jags in public, she told herself that everything was fine.

Then something unexpected happened: Sartre fell seriously in love. Before, most of Sartre's girlfriends had been younger women, who bowed to Beauvoir's authority. Many were her friends; if not, they at least knew to send her birthday cards. But in 1945, on a trip to New York, Sartre took up with a different sort of woman, Dolores Vanetti Ehrenreich—wealthy, sophisticated, older, and, perhaps not incidentally, one of the few women in the world shorter than he. Ehrenreich had no intention of sending Beauvoir birthday cards. Indeed, she was determined to marry Sartre, and, as Beauvoir began to understand, that was a distinct possibility, for Ehrenreich offered him not only the sexual recreation he had with his other women but also the thing that hitherto he had enjoyed only with Beauvoir: intellectual companionship. Beauvoir panicked.

Soon afterward, she received an invitation to go on a lecture tour of the United States. On a stopover in Chi-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cago, she called a number that someone had given her: Nelson Algren, novelist. For two days, he showed her what, in his Chicago-school view, were the local attractions: "I introduced her to stickup men, pimps, baggage thieves. . . . I took her on a tour of the County Jail and showed her the electric chair." Then they went back to his apartment and made love. Apparently, the American street kid enjoyed romancing the French existentialist, and vice versa. Still, it might have been just a passing thing had Beauvoir, upon returning to New York to fly back to France, not received a telegram from Sartre asking if she could delay her homecoming. Ehrenreich was in Paris and wanted to stay with him a little longer. Beauvoir promptly called Algren, and they spent two more weeks together, much of the time between the sheets. She had the first orgasm of her life, and they pledged themselves to each other. Now if Sartre had a lover intent on marriage, so did Beauvoir. Such marriages were not to be, but it took Algren a while to figure that out, so the affair lasted five years, from 1947 through 1951, most of it conducted by mail.

"A Transatlantic Love Affair" contains only Beauvoir's side of the correspondence. Apparently, the editor, Sylvie Le Bon de Beauvoir (Beauvoir's adoptive daughter), was unable to get permission to include Algren's letters. This is a shame; Algren doesn't get his say. Still, Beauvoir's letters are fascinating. As Le Bon de Beauvoir points out in her preface, Beauvoir and Algren had little in common. She had to explain her world to him, and that is what she does—that is how she flirts, by constructing for him a kind of comic theatre of Left Bank life in the forties and fifties. The political situation—the effort of France's postwar intellectuals to find some honorable ground between American capitalism and Russian Communism—is vividly sketched in, as is the literary world, which at that point was inseparable from the political. She has lunch with Carlo Levi; his politics are O.K., but "he lies as naturally as he breathes," and he never picks up a check. Cocteau, "a very well known French poet and pederast," is directing Sartre's new play. He has brought in Christian Bérard to help with the sets, but Bérard spends all his time crying, because his boyfriend has passed out somewhere in the theatre from an ether overdose. Gide dies—"the one who got the Nobel Prize for having written all his life long that it was fine to be a pansy"—and the day after his death the poet Anne-Marie Cazalis sends a telegram to the Catholic writer François Mauriac, who, along with the poet Paul Claudel, was among Gide's archenemies: "HELL DOES NOT EXIST. MAY ENJOY YOURSELF. TELL CLAUDEL. ANDRÉ GIDE." Most of the artists in Paris seem to walk through these pages—Camus, of course, Raymond Queneau, Giacometti (whom Beauvoir adored), Richard Wright (one of the few friends Beauvoir and Algren had in common), Violette Leduc (madly in love with Beauvoir)—breathing and real, working like crazy all day and, at night, going to bars and getting drunk and arguing and slapping each other and seducing each other's lovers and then going off to rest for two months in the country. It is a portrait of the literary life from the inside, with the books born screaming. When Beauvoir published "The Prime of Life," the second volume of her autobiography, one of Sartre's mistresses, Wanda Kosakievicz, took a butcher knife and chopped up a copy—along with her own wrists—so enthusiastically that she practically bled to death. To these people, art mattered.

In Beauvoir's near-English, the events seem all the more immediate, and her voice more intimate. In a foreign language, and in fear of losing Algren, she is unable to summon the self-assurance that made her, in many of her other writings, seem dry and dictatorial—"governessy," to quote Elizabeth Hardwick's review of "The Second Sex." On the contrary, she sounds almost childlike and, at the same time, terribly intelligent and sincere. She also makes charming mistakes. One night she has to write by candlelight: "The electric lamp has blown up, as it often happens." People are sending death threats in response to her and Sartre's anti-Gaullist broadcasts: "As you say, it is the worse disease not to be able of humour." She herself was said not to be able of humor; love proved her otherwise.

It also ripped her in two. A crucial fact of the Beauvoir-Algren relationship was its sexual success. Algren, Beauvoir later said, was "the only truly passionate love in my life." The experience didn't come till she was thirty-nine and

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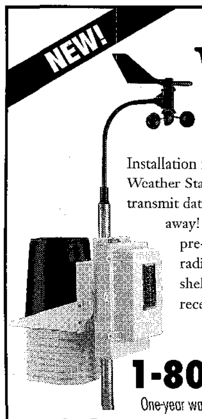

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had given up hope of any such thing. So when it arrived she embraced it wholly. She described herself as his wife. (He had given her a ring.) She telegrammed in panic if his letters were late. She dreamed of being eaten up by him. He called her his little frog; she called him her big crocodile—he had a toothy grin—and she liked to imagine the crocodile swallowing the frog. “It must be nice and warm and comfortable for a little frog to lie leisurely in your crocodile stomach,” she wrote. Sometimes the love talk gets a little tiresome. Still, in view of her long years as Sartre’s eunuch, the spectacle of her sudden sexual happiness is touching:

> I was deeply moved when I read in your letter that you loved, as well as my eyes, my ways in love. And I thought I had to tell you these ways were just my loving for you. I had always the same eyes, but I never loved anybody in these ways.

Such words have been said before (“I only do that with you”), but in her case they were probably true. To this sexual compatibility we also owe the few endearingly dirty parts of the correspondence. In one letter she tells him, in jest, that she has written a report on the sexual behavior of the American male:

> I had a very interesting experience about it. American local males like to make love (which is strange); they do it every day, sometimes twice a day. . . . They walk quite naked in hotel-lobbies—sometimes they pretend to put a kind of towel around their belly, but they manage not to hide what would be hidden; I cannot decently tell you what they do in bed but I can tell you it is not decent at all. I described all that and many other things (their peculiar ways in boat-cabins, the use they do of mirrors, chiefly of round black ones).

Mirrors. Good for her.

Yet at the very same time that Beauvoir was offering herself as Algren’s love slave she was emphatically asserting her independence. Never once did she try to fool him about the impossibility of her coming to live with him. Nor did she disguise Sartre’s role in this. She reassured Algren that Sartre was lousy in bed and that she hadn’t slept with him in years. Still, he needed her, she said, and she would never leave him. Actually, what Beauvoir was offering Algren was, by her postwar lights, an exemplary equality-of-the-sexes arrangement: wifely devotion when she was in his presence but with the right to choose when she would bestow her presence. (She promised to join him several months a year.) He, however, was no believer in equality of the sexes. As he later explained to an interviewer, he and Beauvoir had—or he thought they had—“a relationship that assumed the secondary status of the female in relation to the male.”

But if his confusion was great, imagine hers. For a woman born in 1908, it was one thing to propose an egalitarian relationship, another thing to live it. From letter to letter, sometimes from paragraph to paragraph, she zigs and zags from submissiveness to dominance. My favorite letters are the ones in which she is planning their visits together. She longs for him, she says. She is trembling with joy. She can’t wait to give him everything, everything: “I’ll wash the floor, I’ll cook the whole meals, I’ll write your book as well as mine.” But, by the way, how big is this summer cabin they’re going to? Will she have a room to work in where she won’t have to hear his typewriter noise? And would he mind rearranging his schedule so that she can come in June rather than later, because June is when Sartre will be travelling, too? Then she realizes what she has done, and reverts to the love-slave posture: “I belong to you. . . . I am your own little love token.”

It wasn’t just the number of her demands that worried her. There was a pronounced inequality between Beauvoir and Algren. She was a superbly cultivated upper-bourgeois intellectual. He, though a serious writer, was a working-class tough guy, and willingly provincial. She writes to him in his language; he declines to learn a word of hers. She is fascinated by everything American; he seems indifferent to anything European. (She feels she has to explain to him not only who Cocteau and Gide are but also Léger and Pirandello and Bartók.) She does everything possible to further his career—finds him French publishers and translators, gets his essays published in *Les Temps Modernes*, the journal she and Sartre edited. Meanwhile, she delicately underplays her own career. Though she is writing “The Second Sex,” she almost never shares with him her ideas for that monumental work, and she speaks of her other books as if they were minor things. Her “Ethics of Ambiguity,” which came out in 1947, she describes to him as “a little essay about ethics: how can moral and politics be adjusted to each other nowadays, and things of this kind." It has a pretty cover, she says—pale blue.

In her mind, she tries to make a virtue of their inequality. Compared with those fractious eggheads she hangs out with in Paris, she finds Algren "so generous and genuine." Stuck in New York with a bunch of literary types, she is "wishing to feel a woman in a good man's heart." These words have a familiar ring. What is it? It is the sound of an intellectual having an affair with a streetcar conductor. Now and then, she will make a dangerous little joke. When he scoffs at her notions of sexual equality, she writes back, "I thoroughly admit equality is only a myth, I never sincerely thought you were my equal." Nor does she omit to tell him that she is giving lectures, being interviewed, being translated. She wants him to know that she is someone substantial, someone worth having. But at other times she is obviously afraid that her prominence will scare him off. One gets the sense that she desperately wants this to be a real, old-fashioned love affair, the kind she has read about in novels. Theirs, she tells Algren, is "a beautiful, corny love story." Such stories, she knows, do not normally involve prickly-minded feminist intellectuals.

IN 1948 and again in 1949, the year in which "The Second Sex" was published, Beauvoir and Algren travelled together for several months, but over time he became increasingly surly and withdrawn. (That, by the way, was not just because she refused to live in Chicago. According to his biographer, Bettina Drew, he was surly and withdrawn by nature. If Beauvoir had moved in with him, the affair probably wouldn't have lasted six months.) To minister to his loneliness in her absence, she offered him his sexual freedom; he took it and, like Sartre, told her the details. As his letters became cooler, hers became pleading and desperate, and the relationship took an unpleasant turn. In 1950, he bought a cabin on Lake Michigan. She invited herself for the summer, and when she arrived he told her that he didn't love her anymore, indeed that he was thinking of remarrying his ex-wife. She thereupon stayed with him for *three* months, as he sulked and avoided her. Soon after this grim vacation, she is begging to see him again: "I shall not assume that you love me anew, not even that you have to sleep with me.... But know that I'll always long for your asking me." She apologizes for her tears during the summer: "I realize how... boring they have been for you." He doesn't have to write to her, she says. (Nevertheless, "I go up and down stair in the cold three times a morning" to see if a letter has arrived.) With the outbreak of the Korean conflict, she fears that there will be a world war, but she takes some comfort in this: "For the very first time I was glad that you don't love me any longer because if we never can see each other again, it will not make so much difference now."

The following year, incredibly, she returned to Algren's cabin. This time, he greeted her with the news that they would not sleep together. She spent her days writing her famous essay on Sade. (How much of her defense of Sade was the product of her complicity in Algren's sadism?) On her last day, Algren suddenly blurted out that he loved her, thus rekindling her hopes. "Please don't take your love away from me," she wrote from New York as she waited for the plane to Paris. In his next letter, he did exactly that: he wanted his life back, he said. Finally, she let him go. "Be happy," she wrote, "and keep a small place for me in the basement of your heart." In the basement? The author of these words was at that time the world's leading feminist. Somehow it doesn't help to find out that she finally got over Algren only by starting up with a new man, Claude Lanzmann, the future maker of "Shoah," who was seventeen years her junior. She and Algren went on writing to each other, but her letters soon became chatty and infrequent.

The romance had a bitter sequel. Bair says that all Beauvoir's writing was in the service of understanding her personal experience. Already in 1949 she had begun a novel, "The Mandarins," involving a thirty-nine-year-old woman who, tied to the foremost intellectual in Paris, goes to the United States on a professional trip and enters into a love affair with a tough-guy novelist from Chicago. "It is not exactly about you, honey," Beauvoir wrote to Algren. No, not exactly. She changed his name. But pretty

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much the whole episode is there, souped up into the corny love story she had wanted it to be:

> We threw off our clothes, letting them lie where they fell.
> "Why do I want you so much?" Lewis said.
> "Because I want you so much."
> He took me on the rug, he took me again on the bed.

By the time "The Mandarins" was published, in 1954, the affair was long over. Still, Algren felt that his privacy had been invaded. More was to come. In 1963, Beauvoir published the third volume of her autobiography, "Force of Circumstance," with a full description of the affair, including long excerpts from his letters to her. Algren now turned on her with fury. Reviewing the American edition in *Harper's*, he described her as a writer of asphyxiating dullness. He also went after her weak spot, her femininity. When he was asked by *Newsweek* about the accuracy of her account, he said, "She's fantasizing a relationship in the manner of a middle-aged spinster. It was mostly a friendship. . . . It was casual." There followed a flurry of angry letters, after which they never communicated again. But still he went on insulting her in print. In a 1972 article in *Playboy* he described a trip they once took to Tunisia ("She hadn't shut up since Casablanca"), where they visited a red-light district. As they were leaving, he wrote, a little prostitute ran up to Beauvoir, lifted her dress, and, pointing, yelled to the other whores, "See! She has one too! She has one too!"

PART of Algren's wrath, surely, had to do with the differing curves of their careers. At the peak of their affair, in 1949, they both had their first great successes, she with "The Second Sex," he with "The Man with the Golden Arm," which won the first National Book Award for fiction. But Algren's first triumph was also his last. In the fifties, his life fell in ruins around him. He was trapped in a loveless marriage. (He did remarry his ex-wife, Amanda, probably to punish Beauvoir. He proposed to Amanda a month after he got Beauvoir's news about Lanzmann.) He couldn't write, and when he did, the resulting novel, "A Walk on the Wild Side," was rejected by his publisher. Brought out by another house, it was widely panned. Poor Algren had become one of the "proletarian writers" just as that school was dying out. A man of the social-protest thirties, he was shipwrecked in the formalist fifties. In 1960, he visited Beauvoir in Paris and stayed in her apartment (though not in her bed). As she recorded in "Force of Circumstance," "He was awakened every morning by his own anger: 'I've been eaten alive, made a sucker of, betrayed.' " He wrote one further novel, which he could not get published. Thereafter, he confined himself mostly to travel pieces and book reviews. What money he earned he generally lost at the poker tables. (He was a compulsive gambler.) During his stay in Paris, Beauvoir had to give him spending money.

Meanwhile, Beauvoir's star rose and rose. After "The Second Sex," she published fourteen more books, several of them best-sellers. "The Mandarins" (which included a lot more, and better, than its love story) won the Prix Goncourt, France's most prestigious literary prize. In 1955, as Algren was desperately trying to re-start his career, Beauvoir was writing to him that in order to leave her apartment she had to sneak out the back door of the building, so great was the mob of journalists camped at the front door waiting to interview her about her prize. In the fifties, Sartre and Beauvoir became two of the most important people in Europe. Existentialism was the cry of Paris; it supplied the language, the emotions, indeed the clothing style (black turtlenecks, ballet slippers) of the Left Bank. In 1960, Beauvoir reported to Algren that the second volume of her autobiography had sold a hundred and thirty thousand copies in a single month. He no doubt remembered that figure when he read the third volume and took out after it.

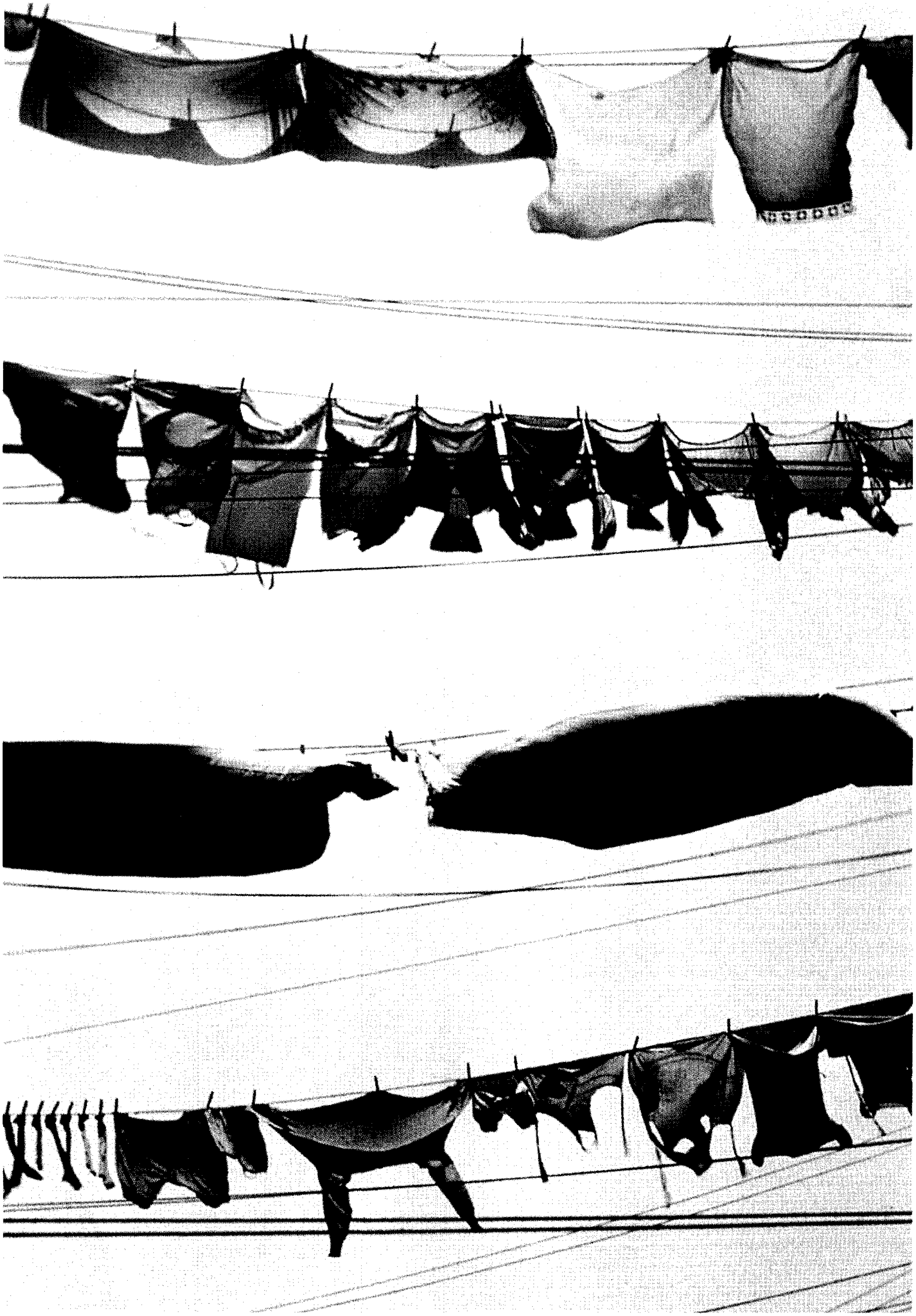
But it was not in her autobiography, or even in "The Mandarins," that Algren should have looked for the effect he had on Beauvoir; it was in "The Second Sex." Many people have commented on the curious violence of "The Second Sex," and on its "victim blaming." Though Beauvoir repeats again and again that women are socialized into inferiority, she spends far fewer words on that process than on the manifestations of women's inferiority—their weakness, muddleheadedness, fatuity, vanity, envy, parasitism, resentment, frigidity, neuroticism, on and on—which, as the force of her portrayal gathers, seem to unmoor themselves from their social cause and become absolute. Her tone is one of disgust. Man, she says, is "transcendence," action; woman is "immanence," need. A famous passage, often quoted, is her description of the male and female sexual anatomies:

> The sex organ of a man is simple and neat as a finger . . . but the feminine sex organ is mysterious even to the woman herself, concealed, mucous, and humid, as it is; it bleeds each month, it is often sullied with bodily fluids . . . a horrid decomposition. . . . Man dives upon his prey like the eagle and the hawk; woman lies in wait like the carnivorous plant, the bog, in which insects and children are swallowed up. She is absorption, suction, humus, pitch and glue, a passive influx, insinuating and viscous.

It's like something out of a monster movie. Here we see the reverberations of Beauvoir's discovery of the power of sex, its ability to create hunger in the woman. Probably the strongest words in "The Second Sex" are those devoted to the subject of female masochism. For the woman in love, Beauvoir writes, "the descent . . . to masochistic madness is an easy one." She showers the man with attentions, endearments; they "bore him to distraction." She grovels, "gathers up the crumbs that the male cares to toss her." These words, I am sorry to report,

ON THE LINE

In 1971, during preparations for his retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art, Walker Evans declared that he hated museums; he preferred the street. But it is difficult to imagine that the photographer would be displeased by the spate of new museum exhibitions of his work. "Walker Evans—Simple Secrets: Photographs from the Collection of Marian and Benjamin A. Hill," organized by Atlanta's High Museum of Art, arrives at the International Center of Photography in September; "Walker Evans: New York" is now on view at the J. Paul Getty Museum, in Los Angeles. This image, from around 1930, of laundry drying above New York's Washington Street, exhibits the quality of transparency which was to become Evans's greatest gift.



"WASHDAY" (1930) ©WALKER EVANS ARCHIVE, THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

were written before, not after, Beauvoir hung around Algren's summer cabin for two years in a row, apologizing for her tears. The book, of course, ends with a ringing call for an end to all that—for free and equal male-female relationships. Such arrangements, she promises, will not preclude "love, happiness, poetry, dream." Whether that is true is something that men and women are still trying to figure out, but in "The Second Sex" we can read how unsure Beauvoir was, too, and how tempted by old-style dependency.

Not surprisingly, many feminists have had mixed feelings about "The Second Sex." Just as, by the sixties, existentialism had been shouldered aside by structuralism—and classical philosophy itself by new theories coming out of anthropology, psychoanalysis, and semiology—so in the seventies French feminism came to be dominated by ideas born of those disciplines, above all by *différence* theory, which viewed woman's difference from man not as a source of oppression but as a well of richness: a better way of thinking and living. Beauvoir's descriptions of femininity as a swamp, a bog, did not go down well with the *différence* theorists. The trouble got worse in 1990, four years after Beauvoir's death, when Bair published her biography, sparing no details of Beauvoir's peonage to Sartre, and when Sylvie Le Bon de Beauvoir, sweeping up the literary remains ("A Transatlantic Love Affair" is part of that process), brought out an edition of Beauvoir's previously unpublished "Letters to Sartre," which broke the news of Beauvoir's pimping for Sartre among her *lycée* students. Now Beauvoir was not just a misogynist; she was a closet bisexual. Indignation was great; her partisans had to plead for her. There will no doubt be more indignation, more pleading, when people get a load of "A Transatlantic Love Affair."

Beauvoir's critics should read some history books. When "The Second Sex" was published, in 1949, Frenchwomen had had the vote for only five years. If Beauvoir's mind, as her detractors claim, was swamped with "masculinist" ideas, those were the only ideas around at the time. If she omitted to tell her public about her lesbian experiences, to do otherwise would have been fatal to the reputation of any woman writer of the period. (Beauvoir's critics should also take another look at her defense of lesbianism—a whole chapter—in "The Second Sex." For 1949, that was brave.) It is possible that the best writers on social injustice—certainly the most moving—are those who grew up when the injustice in question was not viewed as a problem, and who therefore say things that get them in trouble, later, with holders of more correct views, views that they themselves gave birth to. I am thinking of Abraham Lincoln's pre-Civil War statements on the inferiority of Negroes, so decried by recent historians. It is one thing to free a people whom you regard as equal. But what does it take to free a people whom you have been trained to regard as inferior, and who, by your standards, *are* inferior? It takes something else, a kind of imagination and courage that we do not understand.

In the recent flap over Beauvoir we see again what might now be called Larkin syndrome: the insistence on the part of modern critics that celebrated authors' lives be as admirable as their books. In the case of Beauvoir one might answer, "Do as she said, not as she did." (That, in fact, is the title of an article that Deirdre Bair was moved to write for the *Times Magazine* in response to the outrage over the revelations in her biography and in the "Letters to Sartre.") But even if we did as she did, we wouldn't be doing so badly. After all, she did *not* move to Chicago, and her reasons were not just Sartre but also her career, her place in the literary life of Paris. If that career was tied up with her servitude to Sartre, good writing has sprung from more humiliating conditions. And, of course, the relationship with Sartre helped to germinate "The Second Sex." The affair with Algren, so sexual and therefore so searing, may have released her knowledge of the condition of women, but, whatever her denials, the knowledge was certainly there before. If it hadn't been, why would she, the year before meeting Algren, have begun work on what she described as a book "about women situation." What situation was she planning to discuss?

After Algren, Beauvoir returned to her old life—Sartre's work, her work. Claude Lanzmann, though he was with her for seven years and moved in with her, was not allowed to disturb her schedule. Lanzmann told Bair:

> On the first morning, I thought to lie in bed, but she got up, dressed, and went to her work table. "You work there," she said, pointing at the bed. So I got up and sat on the edge of the bed and smoked and pretended that I was working. I don't think she said a word to me until it was time for lunch. Then she went to Sartre and they lunched; sometimes I joined them. Then in the afternoon she went to his place and they worked three, maybe four hours. . . . Later we met for dinner, and almost always she and Sartre would go to sit alone and she would offer the critique of what he wrote that day.

Then she and Lanzmann went home and went to sleep.

In the sixties and seventies, the Sartre-Beauvoir relationship underwent a change. A prodigious drinker and amphetamine-user all his life, Sartre began aging horribly. He drooled; he was incontinent; he went blind. He still chased girls, though, and Beauvoir, who was repelled by illness, let his girls take care of him. He then legally adopted one of his young mistresses, thus paying Beauvoir back for a lifetime of service by depriving her of any control over his literary remains. Beauvoir responded by creating a new life of her own. In the seventies, belatedly but energetically, she became an activist in the women's movement. She had also found a new love, Sylvie Le Bon, thirty-four years younger than she, who, as a student, had asked to meet her. They were a couple for almost twenty-five years, to the end of Beauvoir's life. (No, Beauvoir said, there was no sexual involvement. Le Bon's remarks suggest otherwise.)

Sartre died in 1980. Beauvoir went half mad with grief, throwing herself on his corpse in the hospital. After the funeral, she had to be hospitalized herself for a month. She recovered, adopted Le Bon, and lived quietly, working for feminist causes, for six more years. Algren died in 1981, and at that time she said she felt nothing for him. But clearly she felt something. When she herself succumbed to cirrhosis of the liver (she drank almost as much as Sartre) and pulmonary edema in 1986, she was buried wearing the ring that Algren had given her. She had never taken it off. ♦

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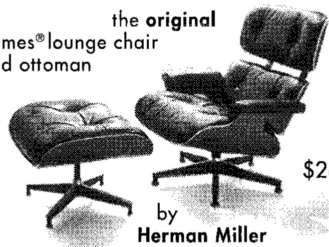

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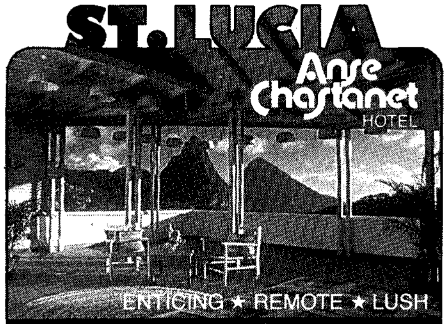

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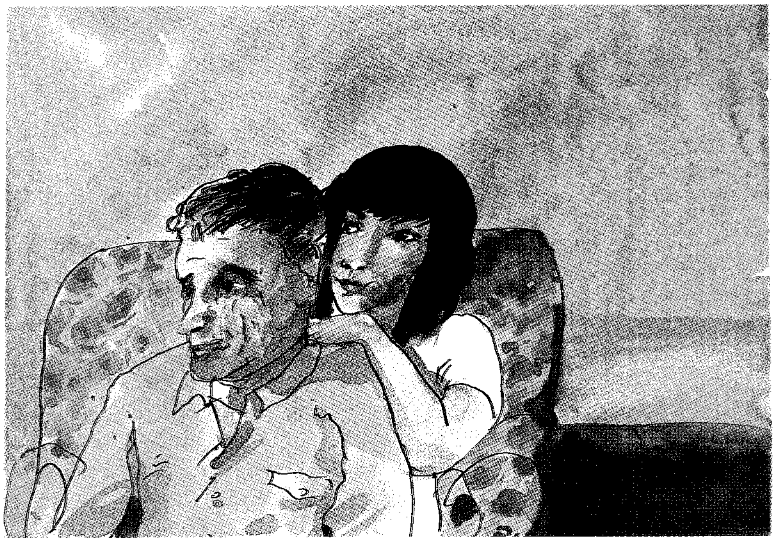
BOOKS

GLASS HOUSE

A mysterious romance, long buried, is finally exhumed.

BY DAPHNE MERKIN

I REMEMBER the first time I came upon Joyce Maynard. It was a Sunday morning—late morning, no doubt, because I hated getting up. I sat down at my parents' dining-room table, blearily pulled the *Times Magazine* toward me, and there she was: a small-boned young woman with enormous eyes, dark bangs, and a pixie charm that practically tap-danced off the page. She was eighteen years old, not much older than I was, but she looked younger. She looked, in fact, like a nymphet with soul, an Ivy League Lolita, sitting cross-legged on the cover, dressed in bluejeans and sneakers, an oversized watch drooping from her thin wrist. While I'd been sleeping late, Maynard, a Yale freshman, had been busy, summing up her generation in a lengthy essay called, majestically, "An 18-Year-Old Looks Back on Life." She had caught the attention of the world by mouthing off like a Wise Child, a teen-ager who could explain her less articulate peers to adults, and in a way that would leave them smiling.



Salinger and Maynard: What did he see in the cultural pin-up girl?

ROBERT ANDREW PARKER

Among the many people who noticed Maynard that day—April 23, 1972—was someone who could be considered the reigning authority on precocity, J. D. Salinger. Salinger was, of course, almost as famous for his disappearance from the stage of life as for his fiction; he had moved to Cornish, New Hampshire (population 1,000), in 1953, a year and a half after the publication of "The Catcher in the Rye," and in 1965, after publishing three more books, he appeared in print for the last time. Indeed, it was hard to imagine him picking up something as prosaic as the Sunday *Magazine;* one thought of him as more removed than that, communing with the birds and a favored few, like William Shawn. I remember hearing that Maynard and Salinger had become involved: it seemed almost ghastly in its unlikeliness, the venerated hermit of the hills taking up with the cultural pin-up girl of the moment. But this coming together of two generational mascots also made a kind of sense—the one was forbidding and soured on mankind, the other chirpy and fresh-faced ("I'm basically an optimist," Maynard had written). Salinger, it seemed, had been hid-

BRIEFLY NOTED

My Secret Mother Lorna Moon, by Richard de Mille (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $25). Richard de Mille, the adopted son of Cecil B., always felt like "the cat that walks by himself." In discovering why, he discovers not only his glamorous mother, Lorna Moon, but also a host of obscure relatives. De Mille's fascination is not with notoriety but with the serpentine pathways of need, compromise, and love; he charts every life with sympathy and respect. This book—part biography, part autobiography, part celebrity memoir—is so exceptional that it deserves a genre of its own.

The Brontës: A Life in Letters, by Juliet Barker (Overlook; $35). Brontë chroniclers have always been simultaneously fascinated by the family's remarkable letters and frustrated by the Victorian horror of personal publicity. Much of the correspondence was dispersed, defaced, or burned, and until this decade the only collection was a haphazard and sprawling affair. Barker's judicious scholarship finally clears the way for us to hear the Brontës tell their own tales.

Stephen Sondheim, by Meryle Secrest (Knopf; $30). An unanswered question lingers at the close of this brisk but revealing biography, written with considerable coöperation from its subject and his friends. The composer-lyricist's personal demons—his overbearing mother, his intolerance of his homosexuality—have darkened the tone of a brilliant series of American musicals, each of which is richly described. Sondheim has finally allowed a measure of contentment to come into his private life, but Secrest seems reluctant to make the obvious conclusion: that his recent work has lost some of his usual irony and complexity.

Once in a House on Fire, by Andrea Ashworth (Metropolitan; $23). This unblinking memoir of a Manchester childhood ("Blood was beginning to crust in his hair. 'That's my dad,' I explained") is valuable less for its chronicle of cruelty at the hands of brutish stepdads than for the poetic bravery forged in such horror. ("*Rue.* I copied it into my exercise book and stared. Such a puny word, considering everything it sucked in.") The young Ashworth's intellectual growth is an unusual yet gripping source of suspense. As she informs a friend, "In our house, homework makes you a rebel."

A Gift for Admiration, by James Lord (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $22). Here are six additional intaglio portraits of mid-century illuminati—among them Sonia Orwell and Peggy Guggenheim—to follow Lord's previous volumes of memoirs. The author, whose New Jersey origins were conventional, freely admits to an early yen (contracted during visits to the Frick) for things both artistic and aristocratic. As this gracious book shows, discernment and a prodigious knack for friendship kept him from becoming either a snob or a bounder, instead turning him into a connoisseur of character.

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ing behind a one-way mirror: although he had resolutely cut himself off from us, when *he* wanted to communicate he had only to reach out a long arm from his rural hideaway and beckon to whoever caught his fancy. There was, too, the thirty-five-year difference in the couple's ages—the faint whiff of pedophilia. This was a writer whose greatest lyricism was saved for young girls, whose Seymour Glass had given a tender goodbye kiss to the arch of a little girl's foot in "A Perfect Day for Bananafish" before going back to his hotel room to kill himself. However you looked at it, though, Joyce Maynard was living out the fantasy of ambitious neophyte female writers everywhere: to be taken under the wing of a Famous Older Male Writer.

And then, it was said, the affair was over. In the years that followed, with rare exceptions, Salinger maintained an unbroken silence, while Maynard went on with her life, clamorously documenting it in newspaper columns and in books: she championed the rewards of motherhood and domesticity, then wrote about being divorced. She also became an avid self-promoter, setting up a Web site for her fans and marketing a CD of songs she'd listened to while writing one of her novels. I never heard Maynard's name without thinking of her dazzling leap into Salinger's arms. How had it happened? And what had gone wrong? It seemed almost mythic, like a vine-covered cottage in a fairy tale.

Now, in a flurry of publishing excitement, including a juicy excerpt in *Vanity Fair*, Maynard has gone public with the details of an affair that has continued to haunt her. In the introduction to her memoir, "At Home in the World" (Picador; $25), she says that she remained "desperately in love" with Salinger: "For over twenty years I revered a man who would have nothing to do with me. . . . But I put the experience away, just as I'd put away the packet of letters he'd written me." The obvious question is why Joyce Maynard has unlocked this drawer again after all these years, and the obvious answer is that ours is a culture addicted to exposure, to "outing" ourselves and others. But do we really want to hear that the author of "For Esmé—with Love and Squalor" spent time whipping up arcane homeopathic cures for both people and dogs? Or that his diet consisted of frozen Birds Eye Tender Tiny Peas for breakfast, and laboriously prepared organic-lamb patties for dinner? J. D. Salinger has been the last holdout against guts-spilling and, no matter how fetishistic his position, we've come to respect it. Ian Hamilton suggests in his foiled biography, "In Search of J. D. Salinger," that there is something disingenuous about Salinger's passion for privacy. It is a gauntlet thrown down—an elaborate game of come-and-get-me. "To what extent," he asks, "was Salinger the victim of America's cultural star system? To what extent its finest flower?" Even so, many of us continue to feel a protectiveness toward Salinger that we don't feel about other writers. His real-life aloofness is directly at odds with his literary gift for intimacy: to read him is to be invited into a magic circle in which your unacknowledged aura of specialness—your genius—has finally been recognized. (It is this same effect of inclusive self-regard, this "terrifying narcissus pool," as Mary McCarthy called it, that some critics have questioned.)

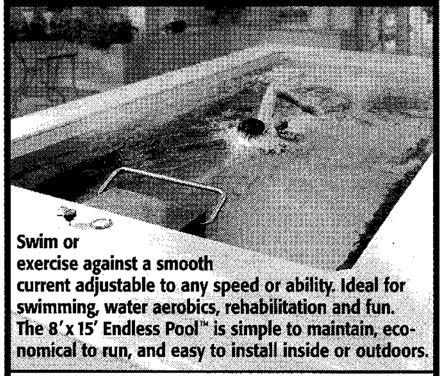
Maynard's pretext for breaking a code of silence that she had repeatedly vowed to honor is the usual one offered in such memoirs: the quest for self-knowledge. "All my life," she writes, "I had been trying to make sense of my experiences without understanding a crucial piece of my history." Thus, after hundreds of pages of autobiographical minutiae (her affair with Salinger actually takes up less than half the book), Maynard arrives at the conclusion that it took a relationship with someone as powerful as the fifty-three-year-old writer to help free her from her parents. "It was a terrible, wrenching way to be taken from my home." Taken from her home? You would think that Maynard was a helpless child, scooped up from playing with her crayons and dragged off to Salinger's cave, when the plain truth is that she had already separated from her parents in the way that many privileged young adults do—that is, by living in a college dorm. But by this point we've grown accustomed to Maynard's habit of glossing over her own extraordinary force of will, and to her slightly hysterical, movie-of-the-week sense of drama.

Maynard conceived of herself as destined for great things from the start. She was the younger of two sisters who grew up in an intellectually vibrant household in Durham, New Hampshire. Her father taught eighteenth-century literature and was a passionate amateur painter. Her mother was Jewish, an intense woman who had a doctorate in English. They were doting, albeit problematic, parents. Joyce's "Daytime Daddy" taught her the crawl and took her on long walks; her "Nighttime Daddy" drank and roamed the house, "red-eyed and ranting." Her mother was highly invested in her daughter: she knit a sweater on toothpicks for Joyce's toy bear and catered to her picky eating habits with special soufflés. But she also cuddled inappropriately with her: "She may comment on my body, check to see if I have any pubic hair yet, make a joke about my pink, childish nipples."

It's all a bit confusing, depending, at any given moment, on whether Maynard wants to blame her parents for insulating her from grownup reality (she claims that her mother never discussed menstruation with her) or for failing to keep their dirty grownup secrets to themselves. "Who else has a mother," she demands, "who taught her the meaning of the word 'cunnilingus'?" Still, her parents' greatest sin was arguably that they led their daughter to believe that she, and everything she says or writes, is of supreme interest. Witness a notation in the eleven-year-old Joyce's journal (which she has preserved, along with every other scrap of paper in her life): "I realize now that even Mummy has flaws! I guess truly no one can come into the 'divine circle' except me. One is always so alone!"

MAYNARD'S affair with Salinger must have seemed like a triumphant end to her loneliness. A few days after her essay appears in the *Times*, she receives a letter from him, in which he warns her about the hazards of visibility. She hasn't read anything he's written, but "the fact that a famous man has conferred approval on me thrills me." For the next six weeks or so, their correspondence flies fast and furious. "This half-Jewish business" that they share weighs heavily in her favor, as does her non-intellectuality. He tells her that they are *Landsmen*—from the same place—and that they're both lowbrows. "We share a deep affection for Mary Tyler Moore," Maynard writes, "although we like Carl Reiner a lot too." She goes to visit him in June, wearing a short, sleeveless A-line shift "printed with the ABC's in bright primary colors," and "purple Mary-Jane-style flats." She and her mother have concocted this fetching "child innocent" outfit, and one assumes that its subtext is lost on neither of them. Salinger has prepared a pristine lunch of bread, cheese, and nuts, which he sets on folding TV tray tables, and the two trade banal confidences. She tells him that Joyce is actually her middle name, while he says that he hates his own given name, Jerome: "Sounds like a podiatrist." For the July 4th weekend, Salinger drives to New York City (Maynard has begun a summer job as an apprentice editorial writer at the *Times*) and brings her back to New Hampshire. They retreat to the bedroom, where Maynard gets her first glimpse of a naked man, but then the romantic scenario bogs down. "When we attempt intercourse," Maynard writes, "the muscles of my vagina simply clamp shut." Salinger promises to help her, and Maynard, like a terrorized mail-order bride, feels fatally connected to him: "It is my new, terrible secret. . . . The fact that Jerry knows binds me more tightly to him than ever." Their failure to complete intercourse over the next five days doesn't curb Salinger's ardor. When he leaves Maynard off in the city, he tells her, "I couldn't have made up a character of a girl I'd love better than you." That fall, she drops out of Yale to move in with him.

Who was it that Salinger saw in Joyce Maynard? Was she the embodiment of Phoebe Caulfield—Holden's younger sister, a lissome reflection of all he held dear? And what did he see when, less than a year later, he groaned, "How did I let this happen? What have I brought on myself?" It was nine months after their affair began that Salinger abruptly ejected Maynard from his bizarre and exclusive universe, sending her back to snowy New Hampshire to pack up her belongings while he and his two children remained behind on a vacation in Florida. If we are to accept Maynard's account, much of Salinger's behavior during the months they lived together was moody and mean: he left her alone in the house while he wrote or pursued his Eastern meditations, and kept track of her food consumption in an alarming fashion, icily noting when she had eaten too much of the cheddar cheese he occasionally bought as a treat. She also claims that he taught her how



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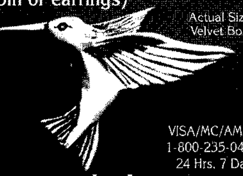

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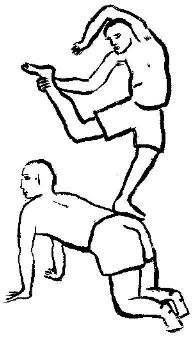
to induce vomiting by sticking a finger down her throat, though it seems odd that a girl who was by her own admission fanatically obsessed with being thin (she weighed eighty-eight pounds when she left Exeter) wouldn't have resorted to this method before.



In the end, it's impossible to know what to believe. Too much of "At Home in the World" takes the form of reconstructed conversations from more than twenty-five years ago and is narrated in a hazy dream time where past and present blur. Maynard uses this chronological impressionism to plant observations that are clearly meant to lead the jury. She describes how she performed oral sex: "He takes hold of my head, then, with surprising firmness, and guides me under the covers. . . . I close my eyes. Tears are streaming down my cheeks. Still, I don't stop. So long as I keep doing this, I know he will love me." The subliminal message here is that Maynard was Salinger's nubile sex slave. But elsewhere she portrays them as a legitimate couple, telling us that they hated to be apart, and that they discussed having a child together (an idle plan, since he never managed to penetrate her). Similarly, Maynard writes that after she turned nineteen, she worried: "What if I'm getting too old for him?" This feels like a suspiciously neat emotional flashback, but it's useful to Maynard to imply that a large part of her allure for Salinger was her youth—just in case we've fogotten.

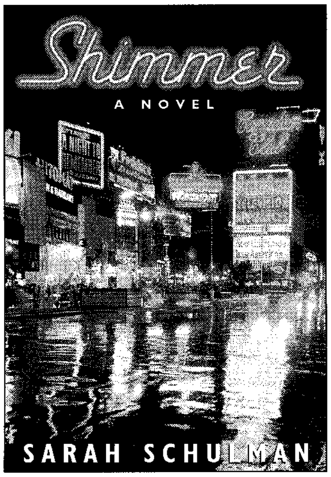
But if there is something unsavory about a fifty-three-year-old man's fascination with an unformed girl, there's something equally creepy about an unformed girl's deliberately shaping herself to fit a role, a recurring motif in Salinger's imagination. She emulates his writing style ("My letters to him are full of . . . parenthetical asides, qualifiers, interior debate with myself") and admits that she presented a tidy version of herself to him—the eager-to-please version she presented to her parents. She inserts comments that are designed to appeal to his disdainful, alienated pose: "There's so much perversion all around me," Maynard writes to him, as though they were two elderly monks.

Maynard appears to suffer from multiple-persona disorder: one minute she is a naïf, lost in the woods; the next she is a resilient survivor, who rises from the ashes of her affair with Salinger to become a star reporter at the *Times*. Indeed, her writing career is hardly incidental to this story. I had the eerie sense that Maynard is not simply reproaching Salinger but is in fact competing with him—the pupil who needs to outshine her teacher. She was always a good student, the kind of girl who applied for all the glittering prizes with a zeal worthy of the young Sylvia Plath: *Scholastic* contests, assignments for *Seventeen*, Exeter (where she is in the first coed graduating class), the *Mademoiselle* Guest Editor contest. When she was eight or nine, Maynard wrote to the president of CBS, informing him that she was available to replace Angela Cartwright on "Make Room for Daddy." It is possible, in fact, to read her *Times Magazine* article as an application to be loved by the world. The man who responded to it had scant use for the world, but inside Salinger's misanthropic recluse, we sense, has always lurked a sentimental pushover.

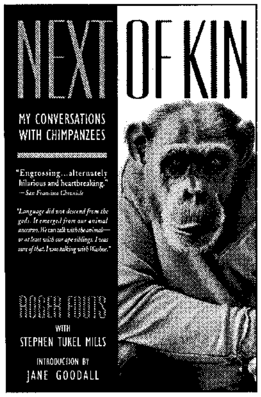
Now Holden's adoring little sister has gone and sold him down the river, or at least tried to. "At Home in the World" strikes me as a bit deluded, as though Maynard thought she could force Salinger to acknowledge her by blowing his cover. The attempt seems not only misjudged but grasping, and one understands why he wearied of her—just as one understands what her sister means when she tells Joyce at one point, "You . . . take . . . up . . . so . . . much . . . space." There is something of the stalker in Maynard, of the oxygen-eater. At the end of the book, on the eve of her forty-fourth birthday, she drives to New Hampshire and waits on Salinger's doorstep until he comes out. She asks him what he wanted from her—what was her "purpose" in his life. It's a question that, even unanswered, is more lonely and true than any of Maynard's breathless confessions. Perhaps the real sadness lies not in her betrayal but in the larger, negating absence that hovers over these pages. After a heated exchange about the motives behind her memoir, and about who has exploited whom, Salinger tells her, "I didn't exploit you! *I don't even know you.*" Search as we might in these untranquil recollections, we don't know him, either. ◆

(Advt.)

In our crowded lives, we have a tendency to take the familiar for granted. A good book, however, can make the familiar extraordinary and, in doing so, expand our perceptions of the world.


Shimmer
A NOVEL
SARAH SCHULMAN

Sarah Schulman's novel ***SHIMMER*** recreates New York City in the repressive "Red Scare" era through the stories of three aspiring urbanites: a would-be reporter, a powerful gossip columnist, and a Columbia University graduate with dreams of establishing a Negro theater. A book that evokes the sights, smells, and sounds of the postwar city—as well as the palpable fears and personal tragedies engendered by the McCarthy blacklists—this drama of lives swept up in the maelstrom of history is related with honesty and compassion and offers a new perspective on a distinct place and time in America.


NEXT OF KIN
MY CONVERSATIONS WITH CHIMPANZEES
"Engrossing...alternately hilarious and heartbreaking."
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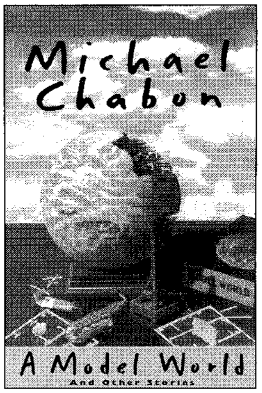
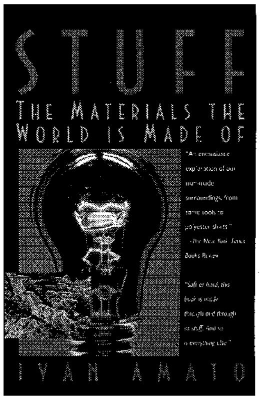
ROGER FOUTS
WITH STEPHEN TUKEL MILLS
INTRODUCTION BY JANE GOODALL

Since the dawn of civilization, humans have dreamed of talking with animals. Scientist **Roger Fouts** has actually done it—pioneering communication with chimpanzees through sign language. His book, ***NEXT OF KIN***, is much more than a chronicle of his experiments in interspecies dialogue. It is the heartfelt and affecting story of his thirty-year friendship with Washoe, a chimp released from the NASA space program. Chimpanzees share more than ninety-eight percent of our DNA. By living and conversing with these sensitive creatures Fouts has not only opened a window into their consciousness, he has gained a profound appreciation of how much we have in common with our closest biological relatives and what they can teach us about ourselves.


Michael Chabon
A Model World
And Other Stories

In ***A MODEL WORLD***, **Michael Chabon** guides us across the rocky emotional terrain of everyday existence, mapping the fault lines along the way. From the ruminations of a has-been baseball player pondering his ruined career to the desperation of a plagiarist grad student confronting his faculty advisor in a "bare-your-soul" parlor game, this collection of wry stories about growing up and growing wise demonstrates that the acclaimed author of *The Mysteries of Pittsburgh* and *Wonder Boys* is equally dexterous when it comes to short fiction.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IVAN AMATO

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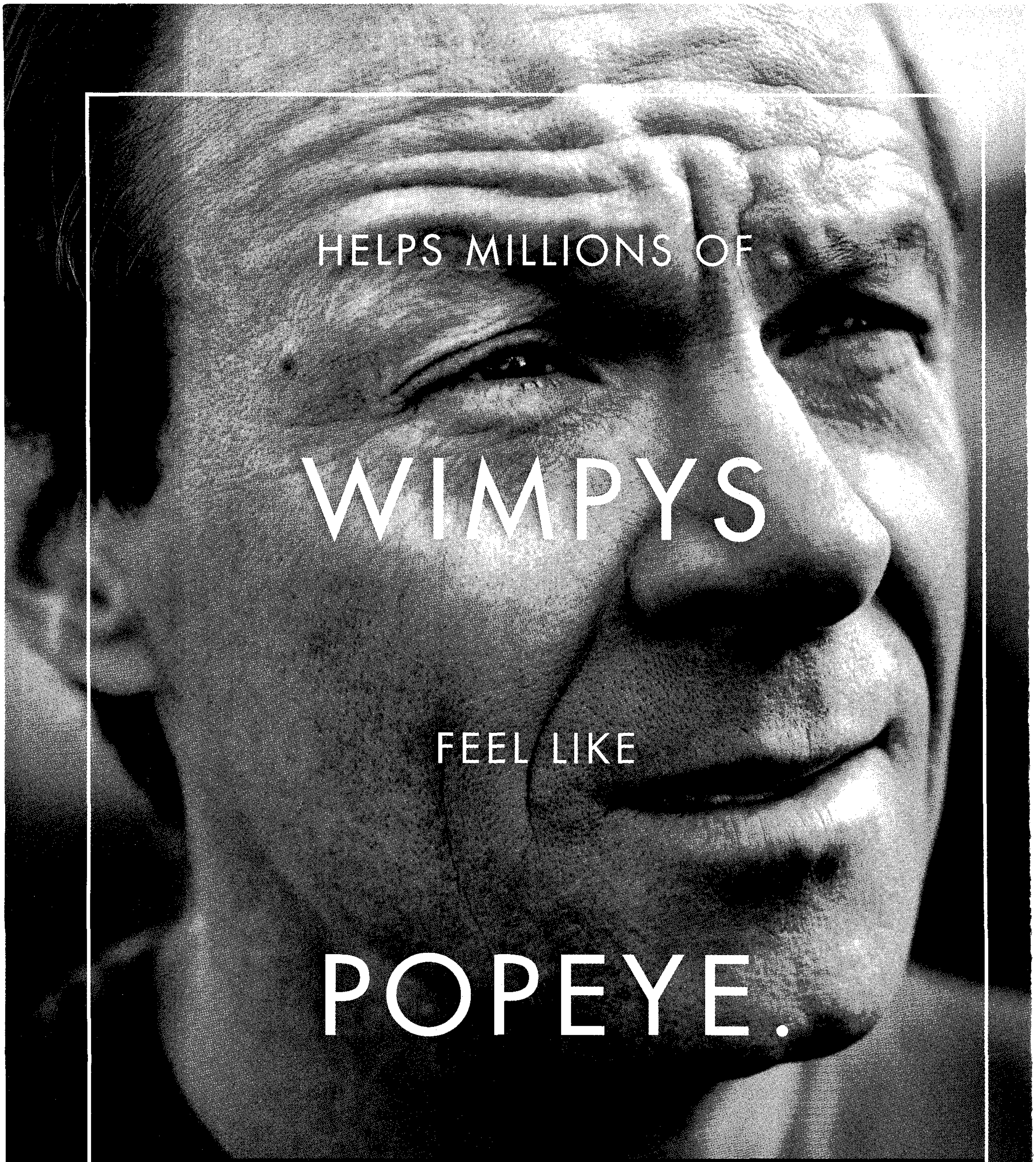

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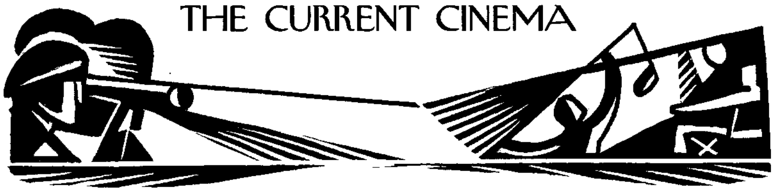
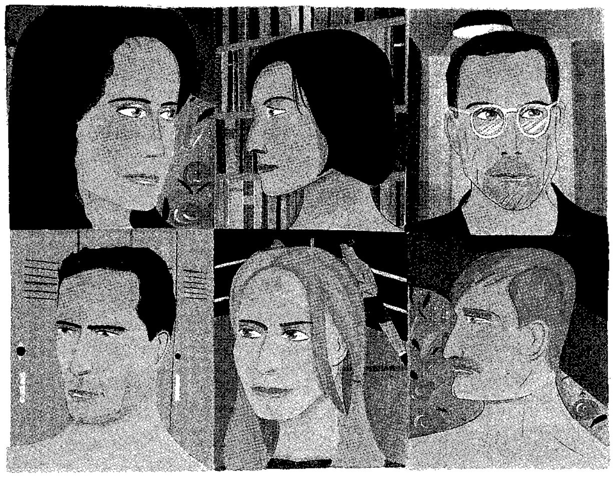


BED AND BORED

Neil LaBute's latest take on the sex comedy.

BY ANTHONY LANE

THE new movie by Neil LaBute, "Your Friends & Neighbors," is about a couple of couples, plus a couple of people who aren't a couple. On my left, Mary (Amy Brenneman) and Barry (Aaron Eckhart); on my right, Terri (Catherine Keener) and Jerry (Ben Stiller). Stuck in the middle are Cary (Jason Patric) and Cheri (Nastassja Kinski). You will notice that all the names rhyme, or half-rhyme; whether you take this as proof of the intricate erotic knots with which the film fiddles or whether it suggests that the characters are sad and indistinguishable jerks is entirely up to you.



The sexual hexagon, clockwise from top left: Brenneman, Keener, Stiller, Eckhart, Kinski, and Patric.

GEOFFREY PARKER

Our story begins with Terri and Jerry having sex, and then with Mary and Barry just barely having sex. Given that most movies work up to this point, introducing the dramatis personae and then politely leading them to the boudoir, it should be refreshing to get the climax out of the way early—the cinematic equivalent of ordering your ice cream before your steak. ("Betty Blue" did it first, and did it ecstatically.) In LaBute's version, on the other hand, neither couple appears to be sharing a beautiful moment. Mary and Barry lie there grimacing, as if they were tightening nuts with a spanner under the bedclothes, while Terri stops in mid-stroke and asks if Jerry would mind keeping his mouth shut. Talking before, during, after, and instead of sex is Jerry's big problem, and the whole movie gets infected with the same complaint: coitus interjectus.

It comes as a surprise, then, when Jerry manages to lure Mary—his best friend's wife—into bed. Why anybody would want to make love to Jerry, a man who wouldn't know love if it came in a tall glass with two cherries and an umbrella on top, I have no idea. Ben Stiller is so unbendingly noisome in this movie that I only hope we can put it down to acting. The problem isn't his beard or his spectacles, or even the toffee-colored roll-neck sweater that, amazingly, he chooses to wear on arrival at the adulterous hotel; it's his leering demonstration of the principle that where there's a weasel there's a way. To this extent, "Your Friends & Neighbors" is an expanded sequel to LaBute's previous work, "In the Company of Men," which delighted in telling us how much you can achieve on a morality-free diet. In theory, there is nothing more appetizing; as far back as Marlowe's Tamburlaine and Barabas, and as recently as John Malkovich's pomaded fiend in "Dangerous Liaisons," the spectacle of a person who elicits pleasure—something dangerously close to creative bliss—from arranging and then annihilating the pleasures of others has tweaked us into a disgusted envy that we dare not ponder too long.

The desolate thing about the world

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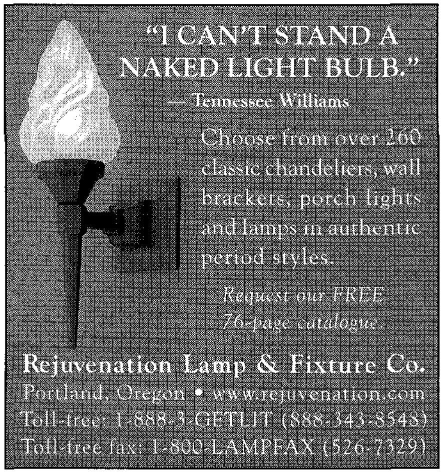

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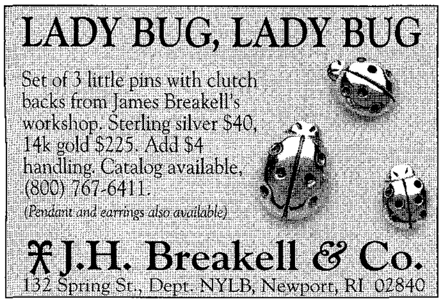

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of Neil LaBute, however, is that the pleasure has been surgically removed. Most of the actors are given so little room for maneuver that their attempts to radiate anxious longing come across as a bad case of cramps. Poor Amy Brenneman gets the Ali MacGraw part, up to her eyebrows in doleful suffering; even worse is the damage inflicted on Catherine Keener, who has displayed, in her three Tom DiCillo movies and as George Clooney's ex in "Out of Sight," such an easy comic style—a sort of panchromatic deadpan—that to strip her of comic color and reduce her to a beaky whinger should, I feel, render LaBute liable to prosecution under federal law. As for Nastassja Kinski, nobody seems to notice how beautiful she is, and she sways through her nothing role like Plan 10 from Outer Space. She goes to bed with Catherine Keener and asks what was nicest about it; Keener tells her not to ask so many questions.

We have come across this happy breed before, in those sex-eats-the-soul pictures of the nineteen-seventies. Many viewers despised "Carnal Knowledge," but the people in "Your Friends & Neighbors" make Mike Nichols's heroes look like Douglas Fairbanks. Jack Nicholson's set piece at the end of that movie, when he goes through a slide show of his conquests (including a selection of the unconquered), sounds contemptuous and offhand about women, but, the longer it goes on, the more heartbreaking its unspoken lust for love becomes. The energetic exactitude of his memories bespeaks a man who has slowly turned into an island. There is nothing to touch that scene in LaBute's film, which is armored with little more than carnal knowingness; nothing, that is, except one speech in a sauna. Jason Patric, playing Cary the bachelor bastard, tells the two other guys—who half look up to him as the free, unadulterated womanizer they would like to be—that the best sex he ever had was with Timmy Carter, a boy at school. Cary's words steam with self-delusion, and you can't be entirely certain that he's not making it all up, but, even if he is, you can feel the helpless heat with which he loses himself in reverie.

"Your Friends & Neighbors" could emerge as the succès de scandale of the summer—a sour companion piece to the other Ben Stiller picture, "There's Something About Mary." But what, precisely, are we being scandalized by? There is almost no nudity; one of the funniest aspects of the movie is that, for all its lunges at sexual frankness, it still clings to the Hollywood rule that women in intimate relationships must at all times clamp the bedsheets under their armpits. (Has anyone in real life *ever* done this?) Presumably, LaBute had no wish to offend, or, rather, he wanted to keep the offense purely verbal. Stiller's character is a drama teacher, and we see him performing—with outstanding clunkiness—a scene from Wycherley, which he then explicates for his students: "In the end it's just men and women. . . . They want to fuck. It's always about fucking." Perhaps, but what an insult to Restoration comedy to boil it down to that hard, horny grit. The result may indeed be a skirts-and-breeches affair, but what about the journey to that end? The joke in Wycherley depends on maintaining a decorous levity in the hunt for low satisfactions—a mismatch denied to all these Terris and Jerrys, whose speeches are as base and formless as the fumbles they describe. With its flat lighting, its extras stalking past like automatons, its addiction to repetition—the characters all eat at the same restaurant and visit the same art gallery—and its unnamed setting, "Your Friends and Neighbors" is like science fiction that has nested within the body of a sex farce. The title points at us, as if to say: They could be you; you are no better than they are. But is that what really interests us about the private lives of others? Our friends and neighbors may well lead lives alarmingly similar to our own; only in our heads, if not our beds, do we stake our claim to be different. ♦

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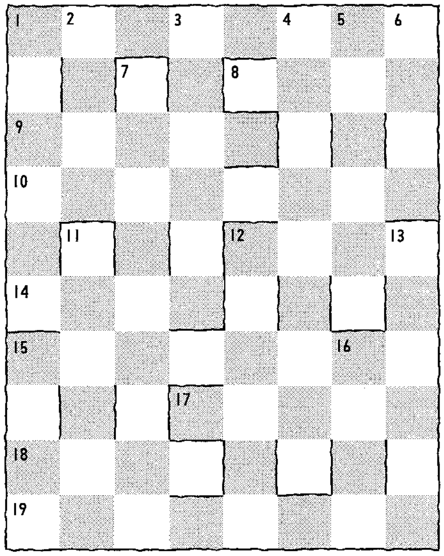
NO. 56 BY MONIKA ZOOK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ACROSS

1 Private lives lead to deviating (8)
8 Pop fusses about (4)
9 Measures tail of sleeping sheep (5)
10 Roughest traitor catches secret agents (8)
12 Fall in love when embraced by Doctor Page (4)
14 Use a towel on outside of a cart (4)
15 Pieces of stage scenery broken apart by Feds (8)
17 Tie a guy from Fife (5)
18 Breaking out new cane (4)
19 Be good with private novice (8)

DOWN

1 Handle for a girl riding horses around (6)
2 Valuable fluids right in ocean (4)
3 Left hint in an unimpressive way (6)
4 In sort of daze, cheer for open-mindedness (9)
5 Nary a faction backed a guy with bright ideas (6)
6 Mad dog at the front and at the back (4)
7 Rubbing Houston the wrong way, sang about soldier (9)
11 Country cooking fat in your ear (6)
12 Kills deer wrong (4,2)
13 Harry and Dotty Peters (6)
15 Wild guess: nuts turned up (4)
16 Big book, in my opinion (4)

• •

The solution to puzzle No. 55 appears on page 147. For a free copy of "The New Yorker's Guide to Solving Cryptic Crosswords," please send your fax number or a stamped, self-addressed envelope to "Solvers' Guide," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. For an electronic version, send an E-mail to puzzleguide@newyorker.com.

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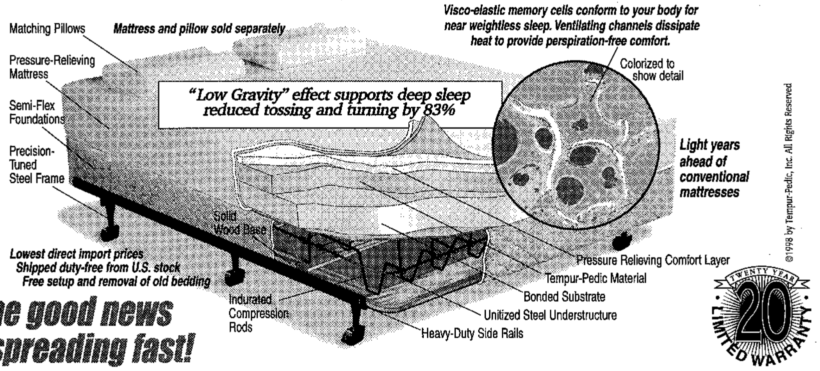
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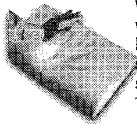

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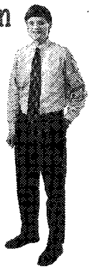

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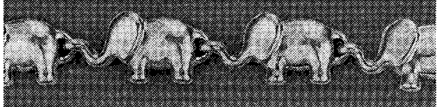

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A SUMMER INDOORS

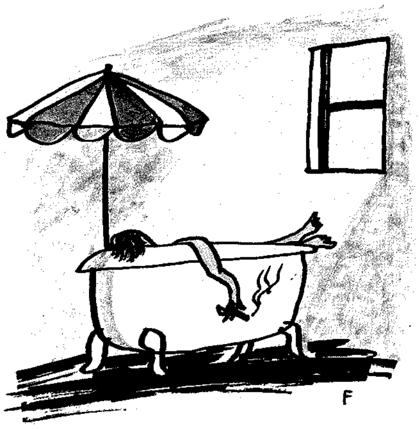
BY ALISON ROSE

BACK before El Niño and the Channel 4 Doppler Weather Watch, the weather seemed more private. A steamy summer, in particular, always felt like something that was happening to *me*, and it wasn't the heat I worried about but the perversity. Early in the summer of 1969, I recall, a particularly ferocious heat wave made me resent the human nakedness I was suddenly being forced to look at everywhere in New York. I didn't want to wear those skimpy, short clothes that showed so much skin, right in front of strangers. Grim sidewalks and stone storefronts didn't go with pale, sweating flesh, and glass just reflected more of it. So little privacy! My windows overlooked the Sutton Theatre, and I felt sorry for the people standing in the movie lines down there: older women with sagging skin and clammy upper arms, young women yanking down tiny skirts to cover their hindquarters in the sweltering air.

In July of that year, I slammed my apartment door on summer. First, though, I went across town to Bendel's and bought eight nightgowns made in Italy, each of them different and all of them long. The saleswoman thought I was getting married—she said so—but what I was doing was buying my summer wardrobe. Nightgowns were so much nicer than the cheesy little minidresses everyone was wearing. They felt more private.

Inside, I could wear my nightgowns and not worry about what strangers would think. The man I was living with—there wasn't anything I couldn't let him see—would come home from work to our one-room apartment, on East Fifty-seventh Street, bringing porterhouse steaks, and tell me about the airlessness and stench of the subway. We decided that we didn't have to take a car or an airplane to a real beach. We took cool baths instead, one at a time, with the other sitting on the bathroom sink, smoking, legs dangling. By the time it was my turn, he might open the window for a moment, for the breeze, and he'd move the soap dish a bit to make room for a gin-and-tonic, a slice of lime. The sand we imagined underneath us was better than actual sand. After my bath I'd change into my dinner nightgown, often a black silky one, and after he'd cooked the steaks in the broiler, behind the smoky kitchen shutters, we'd eat them at a round wooden table in a corner of our room, with the air-conditioner turned up. It was more privacy than we would have had at Lake Tahoe or Nantucket.

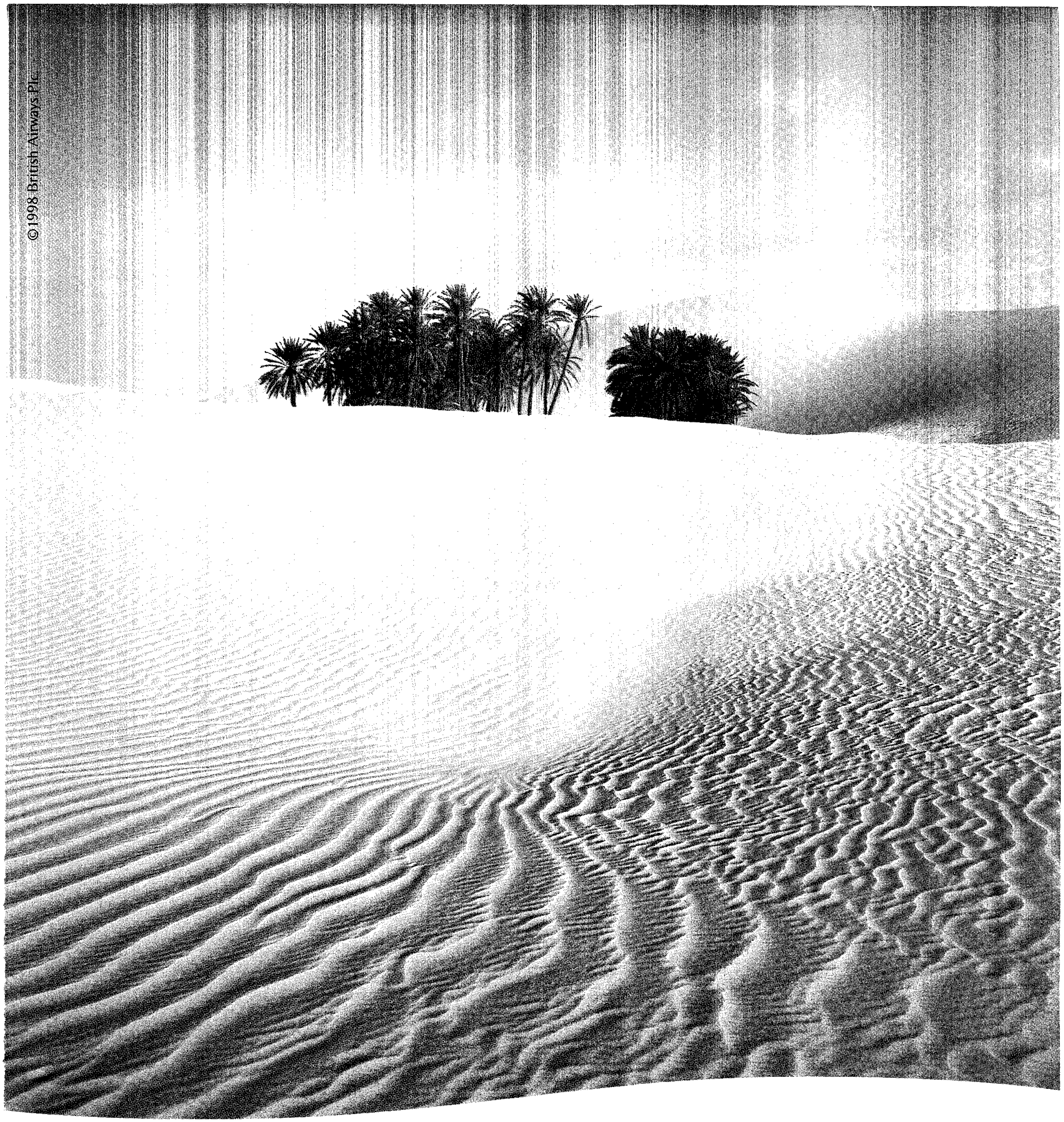
After this man moved out, in August, I completely abandoned summer. I had all the nightgowns professionally laundered, wrapped them in tissue paper, and put them in a suitcase under the bed. Then I walked over to Woolworth's, on Third Avenue (I ate the last orange Creamsicle from the freezer on the way), and bought enough skeins of pale-pink and pale-blue yarn to knit a blanket that could cover a double bed. I dragged the yarn, in two large plastic bags, through the sticky air back to my darkened apartment, and pulled on a long-sleeved gray cable-knit cardigan over a short pleated flannel skirt and black tights. I put Shalimar, not Jean Naté, on the insides of my wrists, because the smell reminded me of ice-skating rinks. Then, with the fake chill all around me, I sat in a director's chair right next to the air-conditioner and knitted.



I liked the feeling of the woolly, cake-colored yarn between my fingers. I liked knowing how to knit the squares together with my masterly blanket stitch. Every once in a while, I would set the knitting needles aside and smoke a Kent cigarette. When I absolutely had to, I took off my winter clothes, threw on something lightweight but non-revealing, and walked a block and a half over to D'Agostino for some food. I did this fast, because daylight, heat, bare legs, halter tops, and flesh-at-large were the enemy.

Some mornings, I took a longer break and went to the Mayflower—a coffee shop at Fifty-eighth and Third, across from Schrafft's—for Cream of Wheat, poached eggs on buttered whole-wheat toast, and hot chocolate with whipped cream: an homage to winter. One day, Philip Roth—dark, wavy hair, tallish—was there by himself. "Portnoy's Complaint" had come out not long before, and he looked solitary, in an enviable way, as if his own thinking were more than sufficient company. He was a reminder that each of us had certifiable permission to do *anything*. If Portnoy had "fucked [his] own family's dinner" in that book, as he had written, I could deform summer into winter if I felt like it. I came back home to the pink and blue knitted squares, which I'd left spread out on the bed, to measure how much I had accomplished; turned the air-conditioner up as high as it would go; got dressed for the cold again; and sat down to knit some more. The cat knew what to do, too. She sat in her winter position: under a Chinese lamp, where she could feel the heat from the light bulb for the sun. ♦

FILIP PAGOWSKI



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